PLATFORM COOPERATIVES AND THE STATE: LESSONS FROM BRAZIL'S PUBLIC POLICIES (2023-2025)

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Executive Summary

With R$ 13 million invested in a public white-label platform for multiple cooperatives and a platform for a national federation of drivers' cooperatives, the Brazilian state has emerged as one of the most important cases of public support for platform cooperativism in the world. In this context, this report analyzes public policies in this field during the third Lula administration (2023–2026), the first to formally recognize platform cooperativism as a domain of national public policy.

Based on this analysis, including both its achievements and its structural gaps, the report presents, as a normative contribution, a detailed plan for effective public policies for platform cooperativism and the Digital Solidarity Economy, translating demands from the international literature and Brazilian civil society into concrete, empirically grounded mechanisms.

Combining semi-structured interviews, participant observation in policymaking spaces, and systematic document analysis, the report's main finding is that formal recognition, while necessary, proved insufficient to build a sustainable policy field. The gap between recognition and implementation was produced by five structural conditions: 1) institutional fragility; 2) the absence of interministerial and interagency coordination; 3) weak articulation in the legislative branch and almost none in the judiciary; 4) fragmentation within the cooperative movement; and 5) the temporal mismatch between short electoral cycles and the longer time horizons required for policy consolidation.

Although focused on the Brazilian case, the analysis speaks to broader debates on platform cooperativism policy in the Global South and Majority World, offering one of the most detailed accounts to date of what it takes to move from policy recognition to policy consolidation.

Keywords: platform cooperativism; digital solidarity economy; public policy; Brazil; platform labor; platform capitalism; Global South; Majority World.

Introduction

This ICDE report advances an action plan for the development of effective public policies for platform cooperativism and the digital solidarity economy in Brazil. It does so through an extensive analysis of the relationship between the Brazilian state and platform cooperativism during the third Lula administration (2023-2026), the first to grant formal recognition to platform cooperativism as a relevant public policy issue.

Although this report focuses on the Brazilian context, it is also relevant for an international audience because Brazil offers a unique example of efforts to transform platform cooperativism from a critical and normative concept into an actual domain of national state policy through the creation of innovative policy instruments.

As this report shows, these include unprecedented initiatives in the context of national governments, such as a publicly funded white-label platform designed to be adapted by different worker cooperatives, as well as the state recognition of a new policy and theoretical field under the name of the Digital Solidarity Economy. Nevertheless, understanding what these instruments achieved, and what they did not, requires confronting a deeper institutional paradox.

The Central Puzzle: A Strong Cooperative Tradition That Has Not Extended to Platform Cooperatives

Brazil has a century-long cooperative tradition, currently encompassing 25.8 million cooperative workers (OCB, 2024). State support for the sector dates back to the 1930s, with the first legal framework for cooperatives, and was later consolidated in the Brazilian Constitution, which defines the promotion of cooperativism as a duty of the state (Zanatta, 2022). Today, public procurement and

credit channel USD 1.78 billion annually to the cooperative sector (OCB, 2025). Yet, beyond few ambitious but isolated initiatives, platform cooperativism has remained almost entirely outside this broader institutional architecture of support.

Against this background, the analytical portion of the report is guided by a central question: why has platform cooperativism, despite being formally recognized by a state with a long-standing tradition of supporting cooperativism, failed to consolidate as a structured field of public policy in Brazil?

To answer this question, the report traces four years of dialogue between civil society and the state, examining the policies proposed, the progress achieved, and the gaps that remain unresolved. In doing so, it identifies the main political obstacles that hindered the effective implementation of public policy during this period, both within government and among the movements involved in advancing this agenda. The action plan that follows responds directly to each of these findings.

Six Pathways for Policy and Movement Building

To address the gaps identified, the normative section of the report proposes an action plan structured around six areas: financing and economic instruments; research and incubation; governance; technological infrastructure; legislative and judicial advocacy; and movement building (Fig. 1). Across these sectors, it translates proposals from the international literature and demands advanced by Brazilian civil society into concrete, feasible mechanisms grounded in the institutional and legal frameworks of the Brazilian state. It also identifies the most effective pathways through which workers can advocate for these proposals and help turn them into reality.

The recommendations are based on an extensive research process, drawing on interviews with key stakeholders, literature review, legal analysis, internal and public government documents, and participant observation in policymaking

spaces. In this sense, we trace how public policies around platform cooperativism emerged during four years, primarily through the institutional coordination led by the National Secretariat for Popular and Solidarity Economy (SENAES) within the Ministry of Labor.

The report opens with its recommendations synthesized in the action plan, a choice that reflects the document's practical orientation: the proposals are presented first so that policymakers, cooperative leaders, and movement actors can engage with them directly, without having to navigate the full analytical apparatus. The subsequent sections then provide the empirical and theoretical foundation for these recommendations and may be particularly useful for readers more interested in an analytical perspective, such as academic researchers.

Fig1

How This Report Is Organized

Section I presents the action plan in a synthetic and programmatic form. Section II examines the historical context of Brazil's engagement with cooperativism, the solidarity economy, and platform cooperativism. Section III summarizes the literature on public policies in this field and details the research methodology. Section IV, the report's main analytical section, examines the evolution of policymaking for platform cooperativism between 2022 and 2025, assessing the progress achieved and identifying the political and structural obstacles that have constrained its consolidation. Finally, for readers who wish to examine the empirical record in greater detail, the annex provides a synthesis of the evolution of public policy formulation from 2022 to 2025. Together, these sections support the policy proposals and demonstrate that the gap between formal recognition and effective policy consolidation in Brazil is not accidental but rather the result of identifiable and addressable structural conditions.

I. Action Plan for Advancing Public Policies for Platform Cooperativism and the Digital Solidarity Economy in Brazil

The action plan is organized around six areas. Within each, we prioritize the measures with the greatest potential to produce durable, systemic change and that can be advanced within Brazil's institutional landscape. The proposals do not aim to merely restate the consensus found in the literature or repeat the demands that have circulated since 2022, which are documented extensively in Section III and IV. Instead, each recommendation that follows responds to a specific structural obstacle identified in the research: the absence of permanent and transparent financing mechanisms, the fragility of governance institutions, the stagnation of the legal framework, the concentration of technological development in universities rather than in worker organizations, and the fragmentation of the movement itself. A full summary of all proposals is provided in Table I in the end.

1.1 Financing and Economic Instruments

The research shows that the central problem is not the absence of financing mechanisms but the inability of cooperatives to access those that already exist. Bureaucratic entry barriers and the absence of any systematic mapping of available programs have created conditions in which access to resources is determined by political proximity rather than programmatic criteria, replacing continuous public support with discretionary, one-off interventions.

To address these structural conditions, this section proposes six concrete measures: a comprehensive mapping and active brokerage of existing credit lines at public banks and innovation agencies; the operationalization of the National Solidarity Economy Fund with explicit instruments for platform cooperatives and the DSE; the extension of credit and procurement mechanisms to non-formally registered self-managed worker initiatives; full digitization and technical reform of CADSOL to guarantee public procurement; the creation of anti-dumping protections through CADE for cooperative platforms; and a campaign to tax digital monopolies and establish a dedicated Digital Sovereignty and Solidarity Innovation Fund. Together, these measures aim to expand transparency, ensure continuity beyond different administrations, and recognize that access to credit alone is insufficient if cooperative platforms remain exposed to the unfair competitive practices of large digital monopolies.

1.1.1 Public Credit

A Financing System That Does Not Reach the Field

The analysis of Brazil's financing landscape for platform cooperativism reveals a paradox: the country possesses one of the most extensive networks of public development banks and innovation agencies in the Global South, yet none of

the cooperatives or collectives interviewed for this research had ever received financial support from any of them. BNDES, the National Bank for Economic and Social Development, finances large-scale national development projects and operates PROINCO, a program explicitly designed to support cooperatives and associative enterprises. FINEP, the Funding Authority for Studies and Projects, supports technological innovation and scientific research and held exploratory meetings with platform cooperatives during the period of the research. However, neither BNDES or FINEP produced a single disbursement. Therefore, the problem is not the absence of public financial instruments but the failure to connect platform cooperatives to the ones that already exist, combined with the dysfunction of the certification infrastructure that would make that connection possible.

CADSOL as a Structural Bottleneck

The National Registry of Solidarity Economy Enterprises (CADSOL) is the gateway through which solidarity initiatives, such as platform cooperatives, gain official certification and become eligible for public procurement and government support programs. Yet the system is so dysfunctional in practice that even national federations of cooperatives with strong ties to the government required over a year of attempts to complete registration due to technical failures in the online platform.

Therefore, full digitization of CADSOL, supported by video tutorials, clear documentation, and dedicated technical assistance for organizations that lack legal and accounting expertise, is a prerequisite for any other financing measure. Alongside this, the National Secretariat for Popular and Solidarity Economy (SENAES) should map and publish all existing credit lines managed by public banks such as BNDES, Caixa Econômica Federal, and Banco do Brasil, as well as innovation agencies including FINEP and CNPq, identifying which programs platform cooperatives could realistically access and what barriers currently prevent them from doing so. SENAES should then actively broker their inclusion in these programs rather than leaving cooperatives to navigate complex bureaucratic landscapes on their own.

Toward Stable and Predictable Funding: Designing Financial Instruments for Platform Cooperatives

The medium-term financing priority is operationalizing the National Solidarity Economy Fund, which was proposed at the 4th CONAES in 2025 as part of the Second National Plan for the Solidarity Economy. The fund would establish a permanent budgetary mechanism for the sector, providing more stable and predictable resources than the parliamentary amendments that cooperatives have overwhelmingly depended on during the last period. Parliamentary amendments, as the research documents, follow no transparent distribution criteria and depend on the individual relationships each organization maintains with specific legislators, generating the discretionary access to resources that has been one of the field's most persistent structural problems.

The fund's design must explicitly include instruments for platform cooperatives and DSE initiatives, a provision conspicuously absent from the current Paul Singer Law (Law 15.068/2024) that established the National Policy for the Solidarity Economy and the National System for the Solidarity Economy. The fund should support not only the technical development of the platform, but also worker training, marketing, professional management, and market strategies. State-funding for cooperative platforms has so far left these areas entirely without dedicated resources.

Considering the identified barriers to formalization of cooperatives, credit lines and public procurement mechanisms must also be made accessible not only to formally registered cooperatives but to other self-managed worker arrangements and worker-owned digital initiatives, with selection criteria that include regional development, intersectionality, and socio-environmental impact alongside evaluations of long-term economic viability.

Dialogue should also be initiated with the Central Bank to facilitate bank account opening and financial access for cooperative platforms and DSE initiatives. This should include removing barriers such as requirements for exclusive physical headquarters, creating proportional regulatory mechanisms such as sandboxes with lower capital requirements, and ensuring that platform cooperatives can participate directly in Pix through the Instant Payment System (SPI), thereby reducing dependence on intermediary banks. It should also explore guidelines for the issuance of utility tokens or social currencies interoperable with Drex, allowing cooperatives to automate payments through smart contracts, as well as the use of the CVM's FÁCIL regime to enable smaller cooperatives to access capital markets with less bureaucracy while preserving democratic control.

Furthermore, coordination with the Federal Revenue Service should facilitate access to fiscal data, so that cooperatives can demonstrate revenue and qualify for cheaper rural or business credit lines. Finally, beyond facilitating access to existing programs, SENAES, allied ministries, and parliamentary offices should actively promote dialogue with public banks to design new instruments specifically suited to the realities of platform cooperatives: microcredit lines calibrated to the smaller scale of early-stage cooperatives, community financing mechanisms that recognize informal and solidarity-based collateral, and progressive credit conditions that grow alongside the cooperative's capacity. The absence of such instruments is not merely a gap in the financial market but a policy choice that can be reversed.

1.1.2 Public Procurement

Public procurement is one of the most powerful, yet most underused, instruments available to the Brazilian state to support platform cooperativism. During the first Lula administration, programs such as the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) and the Food Acquisition Program (PAA) introduced mandatory procurement quotas from solidarity economy enterprises, helping to transform the economic viability of thousands of rural cooperatives. A similar dynamic also emerged in the digital sphere: beginning in 2003, the federal government's free

software policy required federal ministries and 222 federal agencies to adopt open-source solutions, before this orientation was reversed in 2016, when the Temer administration announced a return to Microsoft licensing contracts. No comparable procurement mechanism, however, has ever been created for platform cooperativism, and not a single cooperative interviewed for this research reported having benefited from a public procurement contract.

Connecting Certification to Procurement Systems: From Formal Eligibility to Actual Contracts

Once certification infrastructure is operational through CADSOL, and platform cooperatives become formally eligible to participate in public purchasing processes, the next priority is to integrate CADSOL with the procurement systems through which public buyers actually make purchases. These include Contrata+Brasil, the federal government's main procurement platform, managed by the Ministry of Management and Innovation in Public Services, which connects public buyers across all levels of government with registered suppliers; SICx, the Express Procurement System created by the Federal Senate, which offers a more streamlined procedure for lower-value legislative purchases; and InovaCPIN, a national platform for the public procurement of innovation coordinated by the Ministry of Development, Industry, Commerce and Services, specifically designed to support the acquisition of innovative solutions and software from smaller enterprises.

Beyond this technical integration, SENAES and PRONINC, the National Program for Incubators of Popular Cooperatives, should dedicate staff and resources to helping platform cooperatives engage with each of these procurement systems, producing accessible guidance materials, offering legal and accounting support, and actively connecting cooperative organizations with public buyers who may be unaware that cooperative digital services are available for procurement. This brokerage function, which currently does not exist in any systematic form, is essential for translating formal eligibility into actual contracts.

Creating Preferential Procurement Mechanisms

The medium-term legislative priority is the creation of specific preferential procurement mechanisms that generate structural and predictable demand for cooperative platforms. The precedent set by PNAE and PAA demonstrates that quota-based or priority-based procurement rules can be transformative for sectors that would otherwise struggle to compete on price alone against larger, more capitalized providers. A similar logic should apply to platform cooperativism: public institutions that contract mobility, delivery, cleaning, care, or technology services should be required or strongly incentivized to give preference to cooperatives operating on certified cooperative platforms, particularly those developed with public resources such as the UFSC white-label platform. This would simultaneously create revenue for cooperatives, generate user adoption for publicly funded platforms, and allow the state to demonstrate that cooperative digital services are viable alternatives to proprietary platforms. In public mobility initiatives specifically, preference should be given to cooperatives operating on the white-label platform funded by the Federal Government, creating a natural initial user base that allows the platform to achieve the network effects necessary for broader competitiveness.

Using Procurement to Build Technological Capacity

Finally, public procurement must be understood not only as a mechanism for purchasing services but as a tool for building cooperative technological capacity. The government should reinstate and expand public procurement programs for software developed by tech cooperatives, integrating them into existing initiatives such as the Digital Culture Points program under the Ministry of Culture, the National AI Strategy, and the Nova Indústria Brasil Plan under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Tech cooperatives such as EITA, which develop open-source digital solutions for social movements and solidarity enterprises, have built significant technical expertise with almost no public support during the period studied. Directing even a fraction of the government's software procurement

budget toward worker-owned technology cooperatives would simultaneously strengthen these organizations, reduce dependence on large proprietary vendors, and expand the stock of open-source tools available to the broader cooperative ecosystem.

1.1.3 Protecting Cooperative Platforms from Unfair Competition

Anti-dumping protection must become part of the policy agenda. SENAES should press CADE, the Administrative Council for Economic Defense and Brazil's main antitrust authority, to establish an open and accessible channel through which cooperatives can file complaints and request investigations into predatory practices by Big Tech companies. State-funded platforms should also include dedicated budgets for worker training, marketing, and user adoption from the outset, so that cooperative alternatives can achieve sufficient scale before being undermined by the pricing strategies of dominant platforms.

Fig2

Furthemore, coordination with the Ministries of Finance and Social Security should aim to design a specific fiscal and social protection regime for platform cooperatives: in social security, creating protections adapted to the intermittent nature of platform work, covering retirement and sick leave for cooperative members; in tax policy, preserving the legal nature of the Cooperative Act within the ongoing tax reform, preventing internal transactions between members and cooperatives from being taxed.

This is necessary because the research shows that cooperative platforms operate in a profoundly uneven competitive environment. Dominant proprietary platforms can sustain deliberate losses in specific markets in order to drive out competitors, a practice commonly described as predatory pricing or dumping. Cooperative platforms, which lack venture capital backing and distribute earnings to workers rather than accumulating profits for reinvestment, are structurally more vulnerable to this dynamic.

1.1.4 An Anti-Monopoly and Pro-Platform Cooperativism Fiscal Policy

Structural financing gaps cannot be addressed through public banks and parliamentary amendments alone. Sustainable support for platform cooperativism requires linking it to a broader redistributive fiscal agenda: one that challenges the concentration of public subsidies in large corporate actors, confronts the fiscal constraints that have limited state capacity during the current administration, and ultimately directs resources extracted from digital monopolies toward the cooperative alternatives they have helped undermine.

Linking Platform Cooperativism to Fiscal Redistribution

Public support for Platform Cooperativism and the Digital Solidarity Economy (DSE) must be linked to a broader redistributive agenda centered on fair taxation

of Big Techs. New funding mechanisms depend on expanding and redirecting state resources away from the privileges that continue to benefit large corporations and financial speculators, and toward initiatives based on democratic ownership and workers' control. In the digital sphere, this struggle takes the form of better taxing digital monopolies.

This broader fiscal agenda is necessary because the development of institutional mechanisms to support platform cooperativism and the digital solidarity economy has been constrained by the Lula government's acceptance of ongoing fiscal austerity. This limit has substantially reduced the Brazilian state's overall capacity to provide public support, particularly for initiatives that challenge monopolies and, more broadly, the logic of capitalist accumulation. Even under the Lula administration, the bulk of public subsidies has continued to flow to major corporate actors in the Brazilian economy, such as Big Agribusiness, rather than to initiatives under workers' control.

Toward a Digital Sovereignty and Solidarity Innovation Fund

In this context, this research points to a structural revenue gap that neither existing public banks nor parliamentary amendments can completely and sustainably address. A more durable response would be to organize around a redistributive fiscal agenda centered on taxing digital monopolies and creating a Digital Sovereignty and Solidarity Innovation Fund dedicated to open-source technological development and cooperative digital platforms. The rationale is straightforward: large proprietary platforms, whose dominance has been built in part on the precarious labor of Brazilian workers, should help finance the alternatives.

This proposal was raised during the 2023 ENAP seminar discussed in Section IV, but was quietly abandoned in subsequent policy spaces, reflecting the political difficulty of advancing redistributive measures under conditions of fiscal austerity and in a Congress dominated by conservative blocs aligned with corporate interests. Even so, reviving it could become an important long-term strategic ob-

jective, helping to drive legislative mobilization and a broader public campaign around the principle that digital monopolies should contribute to financing the common goods they have helped undermine.

1.2 Technological Infrastructure and Commercial Viability

The state must establish a broad public digital infrastructure for cooperative work and the DSE. This section addresses four interconnected dimensions of that infrastructure challenge: the creation of a public cloud service that frees cooperatives from dependence on commercial providers; the consolidation of governance frameworks that guarantee worker control over data and source code; the completion of the two platform development projects that represent the federal government's most concrete investment in the field to date; and the mobilization of public innovation funding to sustain and scale these efforts beyond the current administration.

Building a Public Cloud and Shared Digital Infrastructure

The priority is access to a public national cloud service for solidarity economy and cooperative initiatives, needed to ensure data security, interoperability, and independence from commercial providers such as Amazon Web Services, whose pricing decisions and outages have repeatedly undermined the economic viability of cooperative projects, as documented in Section III.

Considering the technical gaps that have most limited cooperative platforms to date, according to the participants in this research, this public infrastructure must also include in the medium term: open repositories of cooperative technologies; PIX-integrated[1] payment interfaces; open and free geolocation services; and a federated data infrastructure that connects data centers managed by cooperatives, local communities, universities, and public IT companies, such as

DATAPREV and SERPRO. These infrastructures should be managed collectively, establishing a genuinely distributed governance model that prevents the concentration of technical control in any single institution and strengthens the autonomous development of worker-owned digital ecosystems over the long term. The government should also require that when private data centers are established, as compensation for their fiscal subsidies, environmental and social costs, a portion of the capacity be reserved for free and subsidized use by cooperatives and DSE initiatives.

Protecting Worker Control Over Data and Code

Another priority is the consolidation of the intellectual property governance and licensing framework governing state-funded digital platforms for cooperatives to guarantee worker control over data and source code, prevent private capture by false cooperatives, and enable horizontal knowledge transfer among worker organizations and Universities. The Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) experience of a public university developing a platform that can be adapted and used by multiple cooperatives should be formally documented through a comprehensive set of guidelines for state-supported, worker-centered platforms. These guidelines should enshrine principles such as workers' full access to all data generated by the platform and the adoption of transparent, worker-centered algorithms, as digital infrastructures developed with public resources must not become new black boxes that reproduce the opacity of corporate platforms.

From Pilot Projects to Viable Platforms

The two platforms currently under development with federal funding, the Liga Coop (Fig, 2) mobility app for the National Federation of Drivers and the white-label delivery platform developed by the UFSC, represent the federal government's most concrete investment in this field and must be brought to completion. This will require coordinated support from both the executive and legislative branches to ensure budget continuity beyond the current administration, expanded partnerships between UFSC and public IT companies such as SERPRO and DATA-

PREV, and a dedicated communications budget, possibly through the Secretariat for Social Communication of the Presidency, to promote public awareness and user adoption. Without resources for marketing and adoption, even a technically functional platform will struggle to compete in a market where dominant proprietary platforms can invest heavily in user acquisition. This lesson was already illustrated by the Araraquara experience discussed in Section III and should not be repeated.

Expanding Access to Public Innovation Funding

Resources from the National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FNDCT)[2] can be mobilized to create dedicated funding lines for the development of these infrastructures and platforms needed by cooperatives and DSE, through dialogue with the MCTI and its Secretariat for Science and Technology for Social Development (SEDES). This proposal builds on the institutional opening created by Law 847/2025, sanctioned by President Lula, which formally included cooperatives among the beneficiaries of the FNDCT,thereby correcting a legal gap that had long prevented cooperatives from accessing resources available to companies, universities, and research institutes.

As mentioned in the previous section, the government should also reinstate public procurement programs for software developed by technology cooperatives and integrate them into initiatives such as the Digital Culture Points program, the National AI Strategy, and the Nova Indústria Brasil Plan. Furthermore, while the role of universities is essential, it is also important to have public funding available for workers' collectives to develop technological solutions independently, as in the Examples of "Contrate Quem Luta" and "Senhoritas Courier" cooperative platform, which were developed by the technology unit of the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST).

Fig 3

Finally, Brazil must actively pursue in the long term international technology-transfer partnerships, particularly within the BRICS and Latin America, to extend cooperative platforms to partner countries and generate the network effects that make these systems more resilient and competitive. The global expansion of PIX offers a relevant precedent for how a public digital infrastructure developed in Brazil can become a regional reference. Supporting the incubation and continental integration of federations of technology cooperatives, following the model of Argentina's FACTTIC, would further strengthen the autonomous development of worker-owned technological ecosystems.

1.3 Research, Training, and Incubation

The National Program for Incubators of Popular Cooperatives (PRONINC) must be amplified to provide technical, accounting, and legal assistance to platform cooperatives and DSE initiatives, including helping them register in CADSOL and other public procurement systems, thereby removing one of the most persistent entry barriers identified in the research. But expanding PRONINC's operational reach is only one dimension of what is needed. This section argues that building a sustainable ecosystem for platform cooperativism requires three interconnected investments: ensuring that cooperative workers develop the digital literacy necessary to govern the technological tools they use; establishing a dedicated national training infrastructure that reaches the most precarious workers without penalizing their livelihoods; and expanding research, incubation, and education programs capable of generating and disseminating systematic knowledge across universities, movements, and public institutions.

Digital Literacy as a Condition for Technological Sovereignty

Another central element of this knowledge dialogue should be ensuring that workers, who are often previously in precarious forms of employment and may have limited formal education, can access continuous technological training compatible with their working routines.

This training is crucial for enabling cooperative workers to engage with platforms developed by universities and incubators as intelligible and governable tools, rather than as opaque black boxes, and, over time, to build the capacity to manage, maintain, and further develop their technological infrastructure autonomously. Digital literacy is therefore a fundamental condition for workers' technological sovereignty, as it allows democratic decision-making spaces such as assemblies to comprehend and override automated decisions when necessary, while also opening pathways for the gradual incorporation of these workers into tech-related professions.

Without national capacity to train cooperative workers, provide technical support to new initiatives through their early stages, and generate systematic knowledge about what works and why, even well-designed financing and governance mechanisms will be insufficient to sustain the ecosystem. Expanding PRONINC is therefore essential. Over the entire four-year period studied, it issued no new calls specifically targeting platform cooperatives, and no National Training Program was created, despite both measures appearing in every major policy document since 2022. Translating the accumulated proposals on incubation into implemented programs thus requires, above all, guaranteed multi-year funding for PRONINC through the federal budget and parliamentary amendments.

Training Workers for the Cooperative Digital Economy

It is also essential to establish a dedicated National DSE and Platform Cooperativism School for workers. Transfers of public resources from SENAES to universities should be made conditional on their engagement in the construction of this School. This measure would create an institutional incentive for universities to engage with the field not as an object of study but as a practical partner in cooperative formation, ensuring that the expertise accumulated in academic settings is systematically shared with the workers and organizations that need it most.

This National Training Program, combining technical education in management, economics, marketing, data governance, and platform design with popular education methodologies inspired by Paulo Freire, whose pedagogy is rooted in workers' lived experience, would be fundamental to building a sustainable ecosystem. Because precarious workers cannot afford to lose income to attend training, the program must include stipends or flexible, asynchronous learning formats that do not jeopardize workers' livelihoods. This is not a logistical detail but a question of who actually gets to participate in the cooperative economy

Expanding Research, Incubation, and Education

Moreover, PRONINC's scope should be expanded to include technological incubators specialized in platform and data cooperatives, and its mandate should be jointly articulated between the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MCTI), to facilitate receiving resources from the FNDCT, CNPq and CAPES[3]. Sustained funding through public scientific agencies is essential for the development and maintenance of research in this field. A publicly maintained national database of all active platform cooperatives and Digital Solidarity Economy initiatives, continuously updated and cross-referenced with CADSOL, public procurement systems, and the National Employment Database, would provide a foundational tool that currently does not exist and whose absence limits both research and policy implementation.

Therefore, Brazilian public research funding should include dedicated open calls for platform cooperativism and DSE related research, guaranteeing grants for scholars to work in this field and encouraging its inclusion in the curricula of computer science, data science, economics, business administration, and communication programs. International research collaboration with international networks should also be supported to advance South–South cooperation and Brazil's leadership in global digital policy. Furthermore, the National Education Plan (2024–2034), currently under discussion in Congress, offers a longer-term opportunity to include cooperativism and digital solidarity in Brazil's basic and technical education curricula, promoting a gradual cultural shift toward democratic and participatory economic models. This is a decades-long investment, but one whose absence will be felt just as long.

1.4 Governance

The central governance finding of this research is stark: the entire DSE and platform cooperativism agenda has depended on fewer than six officials within SENAES, identified by multiple respondents as the sole interlocutors capable of advancing the field within the federal government. This personalization of policy is not a failure of individuals but a structural condition produced by chronic understaffing, bureaucratic overload, and the absence of stable administrative procedures. It makes the entire field vulnerable to political turnover, internal disputes, and the temporary unavailability of key personnel.

Institutionalizing Governance for Platform Cooperativism

The immediate institutional response is to create a dedicated Secretariat for Digital Solidarity Economy and Platform Cooperativism, ideally within a future Ministry of Popular and Solidarity Economy, with its own permanent staff, guaranteed budget, and clear mandate. A National Council for Platform Cooperativism and the DSE should provide external accountability, establishing work plans with transparent goals, timelines, and indicators for the Secretariat, and reducing the discretionary decision-making that has generated internal tensions within the movement.

Platform cooperatives currently have no representation in the consultative bodies that govern the solidarity economy, neither in the National Council for the Solidarity Economy (CNES) nor in the National Commission of CADSOL. Their inclusion in these bodies is a precondition for influencing the policy design decisions that directly affect them. Without such representation, the criteria and procedures governing public policy for cooperativism will continue to be designed primarily with traditional cooperatives in mind, systematically disadvantaging platform-based and digitally native organizations.

A permanent interministerial working group should also be established to institutionalize coordination among the Ministries of Economy; Science, Technology, and Innovation; Industry and Commerce; Management and Planning; Social Development; and Regional Development, addressing the interministerial fragmentation that has been one of the most consistent obstacles documented in this research.

Beyond the federal level, the agenda should actively engage subnational governments. Forums that bring together state and municipal secretariats, such as CONSECTI[4] and the National Front of Mayors, represent underexplored policy windows where platform cooperativism could gain institutional traction independent of federal electoral cycles.

1.5 Legislative and Judicial Advocacy

No significant legal reform has been achieved in four years. The General Cooperative Law (5.764/1971) remains unchanged, the Paul Singer Law mentions neither platform cooperativism nor the DSE, and the Supreme Court's 2025 ruling on mandatory OCB affiliation has reinforced institutional barriers that the movement has been trying to dismantle since the 1988 Constitution. Breaking this legislative stagnation requires sustained and coordinated political mobilization, not only participation in government-sponsored events.

The first step is building a Parliamentary Front for Platform Cooperativism and the DSE capable of fostering cross-party dialogue and consolidating caucuses within Congress. A unified advocacy booklet linking proposals from the 2025 Thematic Conference to specific ministry programs financeable through parliamentary amendments would give the movement a practical lobbying instrument it currently lacks and help rationalize the allocation of resources through Congress. Collaboration with DIEESE[5] and the advisory offices of congressional leadership should be strengthened to monitor budget votes in the National Congress and state legislatures, particularly the Pluriannual Plans and other instruments that guarantee budget continuity beyond individual administrations.

The legislative priority is reforming the General Cooperative Law to formally recognize digital solidarity economy platforms as a distinct legal category of cooperative enterprise, addressing their specific characteristics: online registration processes, absence of geographic restrictions, recognition of cooperatives with multiple activities and remote work, and multiple membership models encompassing workers, users, and technology workers. Moreover,the Paul Singer Law should be updated to explicitly incorporate the needs of platform cooperativism and the DSE.

Building Legal and Judicial Leverage

The broader regulation of digital platforms, currently under debate in Brazil, offers an additional legislative opening. The movement should advocate for the creation of a sectoral fund financed by progressive taxation on platforms, scaled according to each platform's size and market share, with a dedicated portion of contributions earmarked for financing platform cooperativism and DSE initiatives. This would establish a structural link between the growth of proprietary platforms and the resources available to their cooperative alternatives, creating a self-reinforcing mechanism that does not depend on the federal budget or political goodwill. Furthermore, Platform labor regulation should differentiate between commercial and cooperative platforms regarding the social security regime, ensuring labor rights while imposing obligations proportional to each initiative's size, longevity, and economic model.

On the judicial front, the movement must deepen collaboration with digital rights organizations to monitor and intervene in Supreme Court cases affecting cooperatives, including the pending RE 672.215, which could significantly expand cooperatives' tax liabilities. Theoretical and legal debates around the social function of data ownership should be encouraged, promoting open-data mechanisms and patent waivers for technologies of national interest that would reduce costs and enable cooperatives to access tools essential for their competitive operation.

The dialogue with the Ministry of Justice should also be expanded to finance a broader range of cooperative initiatives through the Diffuse Rights Fund, which has already proven to be one of the few accessible public financing channels for the field. Equally important is strengthening the relationship with Labor Courts: these institutions have both the mandate and the reach to increase the reporting of abusive labor conditions on proprietary platforms, disseminate information about platform cooperativism among exploited workers, and integrate this topic into campaigns promoting decent work. The judiciary is a largely untapped ally in building awareness and institutional legitimacy for the cooperative alternative.

1.6 Movement Building

This research consistently shows that the movement's fragmentation weakens its negotiating power and makes it vulnerable to discretionary government funding decisions. Cooperatives with sustained parliamentary relationships accessed resources; those that only participated in executive-led policy events did not. This asymmetry will not be resolved through better government coordination alone. It requires the movement to build its own autonomous organizational capacity.

The most important step is establishing a permanent coordination structure: periodic national meetings of platform cooperatives, technology cooperatives, worker-controlled platforms, and DSE initiatives that operate independently of academic and government mediation. Direct dialogue between platform cooperativism and other Brazilian movements, including the solidarity economy, trade unions, and social movements such as the MTST, must be strengthened on the movement's own terms rather than through the intermediation of policy spaces convened by government.

Dialogue Between OCB, UNISOL, and Platform Cooperatives

Moreover, a dialogue table about platform cooperativism with all major Brazilian cooperative entities, including OCB and UNISOL[6], using institutional and international intermediaries where helpful, could begin building the minimum common program between institutional cooperativism and social-justice-oriented cooperativism that the field currently lacks. For example, considering platform cooperatives lack organized representation in Congress, the proximity of the institutionalized cooperative system to legislators can yield positive results for both parties. For instance, the OCB's active lobbying helped secure the approval of Law 847/2025, which included cooperatives among the beneficiaries of the FNDCT.

A concrete entry point for this convergence is procurement within the cooperative ecosystem itself. Traditional cooperatives, many of which already operate at significant scale in agriculture, credit, and health, should be encouraged to prioritize the procurement of digital, mobility, and other services from platform cooperatives. Integrating OCB's support networks for more commercially oriented cooperatives into a hybrid ecosystem that also includes solidarity economy mechanisms for marginalized populations would create mutual reinforcement between the two traditions, reducing the chronic dependency of solidarity economy sectors on state resources and generating sustainable internal demand within the cooperative movement itself.

A 2026 Electoral Agenda for Platform Cooperativism

Finally, the immediate strategic horizon for advocacy is the 2026 elections. An action plan for platform cooperativism (Fig. 3) and the DSE should be collectively constructed and presented to presidential, congressional, and state government candidates, building on the lessons of the 2022 plan and the four years of insti-

tutional experience that followed. Furthermore, dialogue with party foundations should include the integration of platform cooperativism in the electoral and policy programs of their parties, with the goal of building a multiparty political coalition in favor of platform cooperativism and DSE.

This plan should include the creation of a Secretariat for the Digital Solidarity Economy and Platform Cooperativism as a non-negotiable institutional demand, ensuring that these issues have a dedicated home in the next government rather than being absorbed, once again, into the broader and often competing umbrella of the solidarity economy. This is the moment to consolidate demands into a coherent political program, one that secures commitments before an administration takes office rather than spending years negotiating from within.

1.7 Conclusion

Taken together, the proposals in this action plan are not a wish list but a map of structurally addressable conditions. The research shows that platform cooperativism in Brazil has not failed for lack of ideas, political will or worker mobilization. It has stalled because the institutional architecture necessary to translate recognition into implementation has not been built. The six areas covered here each correspond to a specific gap in that architecture. Closing them will require sustained coordination among government, movements, universities, and the judiciary, extending well beyond a single electoral cycle. The following sections provide the empirical and analytical foundation for these proposals, documenting how the current gaps emerged, why they have persisted, and what conditions would need to change for this action plan to become reality.

Fig 4

II. From Cooperativism and Solidarity Economy to Platform Cooperativism: The Brazilian Context

The structural obstacles that have prevented platform cooperativism from consolidating as structured public policy in Brazil are the product of institutional arrangements and political dynamics with deep historical roots. The legal framework governing cooperatives, the institutional architecture of the solidarity economy, and the political tensions within the movement itself all bear the marks of decisions made decades ago. Therefore, it is essential to understand where these arrangements originated, how they were established, and the interests they have historically served. This section traces that history and connects it to the diagnostic findings that inform our proposals.

In Brazil, the trajectory of platform cooperativism intersects with three main dimensions: the long-standing cooperative movement shaped by the legal and

institutional frameworks born under authoritarian rule, the tradition of the solidarity economy and its institutional support since the election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2003, and the rise of digital labor platforms over the past decade. Each of these dimensions explain why a government with genuine political commitment to the field has so far produced more recognition than systematic implementation.

2.1 The Legal Architecture of Brazilian Cooperativism

Brazilian cooperativism took its current institutional form mainly under two authoritarian regimes that left a legal legacy that persists to this day. The first decisive moment came during Getulio Vargas's dictatorship in the 1930s, when cooperatives were incorporated into a broader framework of state-directed economic organization, treated as instruments of national planning rather than autonomous associations of workers. The second came under the civil-military dictatorship with Law 5.764 of 1971, which created the National Cooperative Policy and established a highly centralized legal framework that granted the Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB) the legal mandate to represent and organize all cooperatives in the country. This framework concentrated the coordination of the entire cooperative system under a single umbrella organization, creating a structured hierarchy between the OCB and individual cooperatives that defined how cooperatives could be registered, recognized, and supported by the state (Zanatta, 2022).

The redemocratization process of the 1980s introduced important changes. The 1988 Constitution guaranteed freedom of association, established noninterference by the state in cooperative functioning, and reaffirmed through Article 174 that it is the state's duty to promote cooperativism. The Workers' Cooperatives Law (Law 12.690/2012), enacted during the Dilma Rousseff government, further strengthened the institutional framework by establishing clear rights and obligations for workers' cooperatives, including limits on working hours and minimum remuneration standards, and creating legal safeguards against the misuse of cooperative status to circumvent labor protections.

The Persistence of Institutional Barriers

More recently, despite tensions between the OCB and some sectors of the Brazilian platform cooperativism movement, a significant legal advance with potential benefits for cooperative platforms was achieved through OCB's parliamentary leverage: the approval of Law 847/2025, discussed in Section I, which formally included cooperatives among the beneficiaries of the FNDCT[7]. For platform cooperatives, this opens a potential funding channel for technological development that had previously been inaccessible. Whether the implementing regulations will be designed in ways that make the fund genuinely accessible to smaller, non-traditional platform cooperatives remains an open question, and one with which the movement should actively engage.

However, the constitutional and legislative reforms of the democratic period did not fully dismantle the institutional architecture established under authoritarian rule. As Zanatta (2022) argues, the continued maintenance of the 1971 law as the main legal framework, together with the OCB's mandatory affiliation requirements enforced by state commercial boards, continues to be a challenge to the autonomy of grassroots, solidarity-based cooperative initiatives. This is particularly evident in digital initiatives that diverge from the model of large-scale, territorially based, and sector-specific cooperatives for which the system was originally designed.

Platform Cooperatives in a Legal Grey Zone

The current legal framework also imposes governance and financial requirements incompatible with the structure of platform-based organizations. In-person assembly requirements pose challenges for cooperatives whose members are dispersed across multiple Brazilian states or even other countries. The prohibition on external investment restricts growth to members' share contributions, making it difficult to raise the necessary capital to compete with venture-backed platforms, especially for precarious workers, such as couriers and drivers. Fur-

thermore, the territorial logic of state-based cooperative registration creates legal ambiguity for organizations that operate nationally or globally via a single digital infrastructure.

As a result, formalizing under the current framework often forces platform cooperatives into arrangements that undermine their viability, helping explain why many of Brazil's most dynamic initiatives remain in legal grey zones, sacrificing access to public procurement and institutional support in exchange for the organizational flexibility they need to survive. This is precisely why legal reform is one of the central pillars of the action plan proposed in Section I.

2.2 The Solidarity Economy as a Parallel Tradition

Running parallel to the state-shaped cooperative mainstream, a distinct field began to emerge from Brazilian social movements in the 1980s: the solidarity economy. The solidarity economy emerges as a critique of the capitalist system, aiming to strengthen the economic capacity and self-management of actors historically marginalized within it. Rather than waiting for a radical political or economic rupture, it seeks to promote social transformation and justice in the present through community-oriented economic practices. In Brazil, the solidarity economy has evolved into a multifaceted socio-economic movement that generates approximately USD 2.3 billion per year and encompasses between 20,000 and 33,000 enterprises. Grounded in equality, democratic governance of production, and collective ownership of the means of production, it constitutes a direct challenge to the competitive and individualistic logic of capitalism (SENAES, 2024).

What distinguishes the solidarity economy from traditional cooperativism is therefore not just a matter of legal form but of political orientation and social base. Traditional Brazilian cooperativism has historically prioritized large-scale agricultural, credit, and health cooperatives, emphasizing economic efficiency and market integration. Critics argue that, as these organizations expand, they of-

ten come to resemble conventional firms, with decision-making becoming more concentrated and less participatory (Zanatta, 2022). The solidarity economy, by contrast, is rooted in the urban periphery, the informal economy, small-scale local enterprises, and social movements, prioritizing self-management, democratic governance, and social transformation. More broadly, it seeks to organize actors who often fall below the threshold of commercial viability on which traditional cooperativism tends to focus. This distinction matters for understanding which actors within the cooperative field have been best positioned to access public resources and institutional support, and which have historically been marginalized even within policies nominally designed for the sector.

Institutional Trajectory of Solidarity Economy Policy in Brazil

The institutionalization of solidarity economy policy progressed significantly during the first Lula administration through two complementary mechanisms. The National Secretariat for Popular and Solidarity Economy (SENAES), established within the Ministry of Labor, became the executive body responsible for formulating and implementing programs for the sector. The National Registry of Solidarity Economy Enterprises (CADSOL), created alongside SENAES, established the certification mechanism through which solidarity enterprises gain eligibility for public procurement and government support programs. The National Council for the Solidarity Economy (CNES), created in 2003, functioned as a multi-stakeholder advisory body bringing together civil society, academia, and government to ensure participatory governance. This institutional framework was deepened through the National Conferences on the Solidarity Economy (CONAES), decentralized participatory processes that gathered over 59,000 participants across their first three editions and culminated in the First National Solidarity Economy Plan (2015–2019).

This entire architecture was dismantled under the Bolsonaro government. SENAES was formally dissolved in 2019 through Provisional Measure No. 870, government conferences were eliminated, and the First National Plan for the Solidarity Economy was never implemented. The same year also saw the collapse of Arara-

quara's pioneering municipal experiment in publicly supporting a platform cooperative, an initiative that emerged from the city's solidarity economy ecosystem. Through the Public Incubator for the Creative and Solidarity Economy (IPECS), a municipal body of the Araraquara city government, public support was provided to a ride-hailing drivers' cooperative for the development of its own platform. However, the initiative ultimately failed, as discussed in the following section.

Therefore, the third Lula administration, elected in 2022, inherited a solidarity economy policy environment that had been severely weakened and attempted to rebuild it under conditions of administrative scarcity, fiscal austerity, and competing priorities.It was precisely within this fragile and still-recovering institutional framework that the government chose to anchor its engagement with platform cooperativism, directing the movement's demands to SENAES as its principal interlocutor.

Fig 5

2.3 The Emergence and Diversity of Platform Cooperativism in Brazil

In Brazil, Zanatta (2022) offers one of the most comprehensive analyses of the platform cooperativism landscape. This body of work has been complemented by the Platform Cooperativism Observatory, launched in June 2021 at the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos) under the coordination of Rafael Grohmann (2023). Together, these studies map a highly diverse field of initiatives across the country, spanning sectors such as recycling, delivery, culture, and urban mobility. Examples include Cataki and Somos Ciclos in recycling; TransEntrega, Senhoritas Courier, and e-COO in delivery; Contratarte in culture; and driver cooperatives such as COMOBI in Rio Grande do Sul, Coopama and Coomappa in São Paulo, Cooper Dinâmica in Paraná, and Cooperapp in Rio de Janeiro.

Over time, some cases have received particular attention in the academic literature, including Contrate Quem Luta and its creator, the Technology Sector of the MTST (Grohmann, 2018; Zanatta, 2022; Estima, 2023; Rafélis de Broves et al., 2024; Veronese & Salvagni, 2025), Senhoritas Courier (Estima, 2023; Grohmann, 2023; Zanatta, 2022; Veronese & Salvagni, 2025; WOIP, 2025), and Liga Coop, the National Federation of Urban Mobility Cooperatives, which brought together COMOBI, Coopama, Cooper Dinâmica, Cooperapp, and other local initiatives within a single structure.These actors, together with EITA Coop, a technology cooperative composed of developers who create open-source digital solutions and data tools for social movements and the solidarity economy, became some of the main representatives of the field in the public policy arenas convened by the Lula administration.

Institutionalized and Non-Institutionalized Platform Cooperativism

In this context, the field has been shaped by the tension between two distinct traditions that Zanatta (2022) identifies as Institutionalized Platform Cooperativ-

ism (IPC) and Non-Institutionalized Platform Cooperativism (NPC). The IPC sector operates within and through the formal cooperative system represented by OCB, adopting a pragmatic approach that frames platform cooperativism as an opportunity for business modernization, technological innovation, and expansion into data-intensive markets such as credit and agriculture, particularly as a strategy for resisting foreign Big Tech dominance (Zanatta, 2022). OCB formally incorporated platform cooperativism into its agenda in 2019, when it launched the document Propositions for a More Cooperative Brazil, which explicitly endorsed platform cooperativism as part of a broader modernization strategy.

The NPC sector, by contrast, is linked to the solidarity economy, academia, and social movements, and approaches platform cooperativism as an explicitly emancipatory project aimed at confronting the precarization associated with the platformization of work. Yet even within this broad camp, important differences remain. Some initiatives move beyond the goal of cooperative platform ownership alone by incorporating dimensions such as intersectionality, while others develop hybrid solutions that do not necessarily depend on building proprietary apps. Contrate Quem Luta, for example, launched in 2021 by the Tech Sector of the MTST, operates as a worker-owned matching system based on a WhatsApp bot that connects residents of urban occupations and peripheral neighborhoods with people seeking services. Its goal is not only to facilitate labor exchanges, but also to reclaim technological sovereignty and strengthen community solidarity (Grohmann, 2023). By contrast, the MTST's tech sector also developed a fully autonomous platform for Senoritas Courier. Senoritas was founded in 2019 in São Paulo as a collective of cisgender women and trans bicycle couriers guided by feminist and intersectional principles, with the aim of promoting safer and fairer working conditions while challenging algorithmic bias in the gig economy (Rafélis de Broves et al., 2024).

Plurality and Hybridization in Brazilian Platform Cooperativism

The distinction between the IPC and NPC sectors, while analytically useful, must therefore be treated with caution, since the boundaries between them are often blurred in practice. Liga Coop illustrates this hybridity particularly well. The federation, which unified COMOBI, Coopama, Cooper Dinâmica, Cooperapp, and other local mobility initiatives under a national structure, expanded from its origins in Caxias do Sul in 2021 to more than 5,000 drivers across 18 states, navigating pragmatically between the solidarity economy tradition and the formal cooperative registration system. Liga Coop is especially important in the context of this report because it was the only cooperative to secure federal funding for the development of its own platform during the period analyzed. Taken together, these initiatives illustrate the plurality and hybridity of platform cooperativism in Brazil, combining different models of ownership, governance, and technological appropriation across sectors, regions, and political traditions (Veronese & Salvagni, 2025).

Fig 6

2.4 Building Public Policy for Platform Cooperativism in Brazil: The Role of SENAES

Anticipating a third Lula administration historically associated with labor movements, hundreds of organizations, researchers, and activists presented an Action Plan for Platform Cooperativism to the then-candidate in the 2022 election. The plan argued that the government should actively intervene with public procurement policies, solidarity financing, and legal reforms to level the playing field and promote platform cooperatives as fair alternatives to the precariousness of the gig economy. In response, Lula pledged to foster platform worker cooperatives in partnership with municipalities.

The international context for this domestic mobilization was reinforced by the choice of Rio de Janeiro as the site of the 2022 annual conference of the Platform Cooperativism Consortium (PCC) (Fig. 5). Held for the first time in Latin America, the event brought together cooperatives from 11 countries and placed Brazil at the center of a global debate on scaling cooperative digital platforms beyond the Global North, directly addressing questions of data colonialism and technological sovereignty. One of the contributions of the event was a panel gathering key stakeholders to discuss the role of the incoming government in supporting platform cooperatives in Brazil, connecting the international movement with the domestic policy expectations that were taking shape at precisely that moment. In this sense, the Rio de Janeiro conference served as a foundational space of articulation among researchers, cooperatives, and social movements, whose convergence would culminate in the Action Plan for Platform Cooperativism.

When Lula won the election shortly after, that accumulated momentum found a direct institutional pathway: his return to the presidency in 2023 marked the revival of the solidarity economy within the federal government, most visibly through the recreation of the National Secretariat for Popular and Solidarity Economy (SENAES) within the Ministry of Labor. Another important milestone in this renewed institutional framework was the approval, in 2024, of Law 15.068, known as the Paul Singer Law, named after the historical scholar of the field and

first SENAES secretary. This legislation established the National Policy for the Solidarity Economy and the National System for the Solidarity Economy (Brazil, 2024). Together, these instruments formally recognized the solidarity economy as state policy, aligning government and civil society efforts to strengthen cooperative enterprises, expand access to credit and training, and promote democratic and inclusive development.

The new SENAES played a notable role in becoming the federal government's primary interlocutor for the platform cooperativism field. This was made possible by prior articulation during the government formation process among career staff in the Ministry of Labor, members of the Workers' Party, intellectuals, and leaders from the platform cooperativism movement. This alignment was further reinforced by an explicit political decision: President Lula directed demands related to platform cooperativism to the Ministry of Labor and, within it, to SENAES. In this context, the ministry organized in 2023 the workshop "Platform Cooperativism: What Public Policies are possible?" at the National School of Public Administration (ENAP), bringing together representatives from cooperatives, SENAES officials, the Platform Cooperativism Observatory, and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation to bridge the agendas of platform cooperativism and the solidarity economy. In 2024, SENAES, DigiLabour, and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation jointly published the book Digital Solidarity Economy (DSE), consolidating the conceptual agenda for the field and providing the theoretical foundation that would guide subsequent policy formulation within the federal government.

Finally, in 2025, SENAES organized the First Thematic Conference on Digital Solidarity Economy and Platform Cooperativism, a consultative event within the preparatory process for the Fourth National Conference on the Solidarity Economy (IV CONAES). Registering 430 participants, the event gathered representatives of Liga Coop, Cooperativa EITA, the Technology Sector of the MTST (Fig. 6), and collectives from the Free Software Brazil Network and LibreCode, alongside public officials and academics, generating policy proposals and guidelines for the upcoming Second National Plan for the Solidarity Economy. Although consultative, the conference was a milestone in the institutionalization of the digital

solidarity economy within Brazilian public policy, translating years of fragmented experimentation into a coordinated national dialogue on the future of cooperative and democratic digitalization.

At the same time, platform cooperativism entered the solidarity economy field as a relatively new and institutionally marginal agenda, lacking the historical ties to government and the established organizational networks that more traditional actors had accumulated over two previous Workers' Party administrations. This alignment, while politically coherent, also came with structural costs. The solidarity economy apparatus within the Brazilian state is chronically underfunded, carries limited political weight within the federal architecture, and had itself only recently been reconstructed after years of dismantling. Furthermore, the subordination to a broader institutional framework carried practical consequences: the specific proposals generated at the Thematic Conference on Digital Solidarity Economy (DSE) and Platform Cooperativism, along with virtually any explicit reference to the DSE concept itself, were largely absent from the final resolutions of the IV CONAES, absorbed into the more generic logic of the wider solidarity economy agenda.

This context of a policy field being rebuilt from near-zero institutional capacity and within a broader government facing severe fiscal constraints and a hostile Congress, shaped what was and was not possible during the period studied. This fragile context helps explain, for example, why access to public resources for platform cooperatives between 2022 and 2025 continued to follow informal, relationship-based patterns mediated by key interlocutors in SENAES and parliament, rather than consolidating around transparent criteria, open calls, and permanent institutional mechanisms.

Timeline of Key Events

1932

First Brazilian law on Cooperativism
Created during Getúlio Vargas' dictatorship, inspired by fascist corporativism

1971

General Law on Cooperatives
Created during the military dictatorship and still in force; makes OCB membership mandatory.

1988

Democratic Constitution
Includes support for cooperatives as a duty of the State, freedom of cooperative association, and a special tax regime.

2006

Creation of SENAES, CADSOL, and 1st CONAES

1st Lula government. National Secretariat for Popular and Solidarity Economy SENAES),

National Registry of Solidarity Economic Enterprises (CADSOL), and National Council of Solidarity Economy (CONAES) established within the Ministry of Labor.

2016

"Platform Cooperativism" arrives in Brazil
Trebor Scholz's book is translated and launched in the country.

2019

Extinction of SENAES
Bolsonaro's government. SENAES was dissolved by Provisional Measure nº 870.

Failure of Araraquara experience
The platform cooperativism initiative supported by Araraquara's municipality failed after eight months, highlighting dependency on Big Tech's infrastructures and inadequate legal frameworks.

2022

PCC Global Conference in Brazil
The annual meeting of the Platform Cooperative Consortium (PCC) held for the first time in the Global South, in Rio de Janeiro, bringing together representatives from 11 countries spanning four continents.

Action Plan for Platform Cooperativism
Seminar "Platform Cooperativism and Public Policy" organized by the Brazilian
Observatory of Platform Cooperativism brings together scholars, coopera tives, OCB, MTST, and PCC. Event results in a manifesto, the "Action Plan" outlining demands for the sector to then-candidate Lula.

2023

SENAES and CNES Relaunch
3rd Lula government. The SENAES and National Council of Solidarity Economy (CNES) are formally reinstated.

Seminar "Platform Cooperativism: Which Public Policies Are Possible?"
SENAES, DigiLabour, and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation host the semi nar in Brasília, marking the first public conference coordinating federal efforts with social movements and academia.

2024

Launch of "Digital Solidarity Economy" Book
SENAES, DigiLabour, and Rosa Luxemburg Foundation jointly publish the book, consolidating the agenda and providing theoretical support for policy formulation.

Paul Singer Law
Law nº 15.068/2024 institutes the National Policy for Popular and Solidarity Economy (PNES) and the National System of Solidarity Economy (Sinaes), providing official state status for Solidarity Economy.

2025

1st National Conference on Platform Cooperativism and Digital Solidarity Economy
First Thematic Conference on Digital Solidarity Economy and Platform Cooperativism, held within the preparatory process for the 4th National Conference on Solidarity Economy (IV CONAES).

CADSOL Recreation
Reestablished the CADSOL, essential for identifying and certifying entities eligible for federal support policies.

Fig 7

III. Literature Review and Methodology

This section establishes the analytical and empirical foundations on which the report's findings and recommendations rest. It does so through two complementary movements. The first is a review of the scholarly literature on public policy for platform cooperativism, which situates the Brazilian experience within a broader international debate and identifies the key dimensions along which governments have been called upon to act. The second presents the research methodology, describing how data were collected and analyzed, and reflecting on the positionality and limitations of the approach adopted.

3.1 Public Policy and Platform Cooperativism

The scholarly literature on public policy for platform cooperativism converges around a central claim: governments can and should play an active role in fostering cooperative digital ecosystems, using their regulatory, financial, and procurement instruments to counteract the structural advantages that venture capital provides to proprietary platforms. Within this broad consensus, researchers emphasize substantially different dimensions of public intervention.

A Public Policy Approach to Platform Cooperativism

One line of research, represented most prominently by Scholz et al. (2022) and Zanatta (2022), foregrounds the role of institutional design and targeted public economic instruments. Through comparative analysis of cases in Barcelona, Berlin, Kerala, and California, Scholz et al. (2022) argue that governments must strategically deploy public procurement, development bank credit lines and preferential taxation to support worker- and user-owned digital platforms, and may even consider state shareholding as a tool for democratizing the platform economy. This perspective includes broader legal reforms, such as the recognition of multi-stakeholder platform cooperatives, in which workers, consumers, developers, universities and other actors directly involved in the platform share ownership and governance, as well as cross-border or global cooperatives whose members are distributed across multiple nations. Zanatta (2022) adapts this framework to the Brazilian context by arguing that the viability of platform cooperativism depends on confronting the historical legal constraints of the Brazilian cooperative sector, reconnecting the field with the solidarity economy tradition, and extending legal recognition to hybrid and data cooperative models. From this perspective, he highlights the importance of federal incubation funding and above all the reform of Law 5.764 to formally recognize non-traditional and data cooperatives in national development policies.

Beyond Formalization: Worker Autonomy and Intersectionality

A second line of research, developed by Rafélis de Broves et al. (2024), Grohmann (2023) and the Worker-Owned Intersectional Platforms project (WOIP, 2025), shifts the emphasis from policies to formalize cooperatives to the institutional conditions necessary to ensure workers' autonomy and social inclusion. Rafélis de Broves et al. (2024) argue that public policy must above all support platform workers organizing within and beyond formal cooperative structures, encouraging alliances between unions and cooperatives and building grassroots capacity for autonomous action. Grohmann (2023) and the WOIP project deepens this by calling for an intersectional approach that reaches beyond legally formalized cooperatives to include self-managed collectives, women's groups, and racialized digital communities, integrating labor, gender, race, and sexuality as central elements that should inform platform design and governance from the outset. Both perspectives challenge the assumption that better institutional instruments are sufficient: without autonomous political organization by workers, even well-designed public programs tend to be captured by more institutionalized actors, which is precisely the dynamic our research documents during the 2022–2025 period.

The Digital Solidarity Economy in Brazilian Policy and Scholarship

A third and more recent line of argument, developed in dialogue with Brazilian policy developments, introduces the concept of the Digital Solidarity Economy. Rubim and Milanez (2024) present it as both a conceptual and political evolution of the solidarity economy, extending its principles into the digital sphere through a dual strategy: supporting the digital transformation of existing solidarity-based enterprises on one hand, and building a new digital economy rooted in collective ownership as an alternative to uberization on the other. This framework integrates free and open technologies, collective data governance, and digital sovereignty into Brazil's established solidarity economy tradition.

This Southern perspective resonates with the argument developed by Veronese and Salvagni (2025), who propose that the platform cooperativism movement in Brazil has increasingly identified itself as part of this broader field of the digital solidarity economy, understood as both a conceptual and political evolution of the earlier framework. While the original model emphasized platform governance and formal cooperativism, this new paradigm embeds digital cooperativism within the wider institutional architecture of the Brazilian solidarity economy, moving according to the authors beyond a technocentric view that encapsulates all experiences within "platform" economies.

The Contested Emergence of the Digital Solidarity Economy

In practice, our literature review reveals an ongoing tension between the institutional and academic discourses surrounding platform cooperativism and its relationship with the state. Some strategies seek to legitimize cooperativism through narratives of efficiency, competitiveness, and improved working conditions, yet remain confined within the boundaries of a capitalist economy (Zanatta, 2022). These initiatives often correspond to larger-scale, commercially oriented experiences that, while achieving visibility, professionalization and being very successful in capturing public incentives, tend to distance themselves from grassroots democratic practices. In contrast, a second field of smaller activist and solidarity-driven initiatives focuses on organizing marginalized sectors within the informal economy and ultimately aims for systemic transformations in production and ownership relations, encapsulated in the concept of the solidarity economy. However, these initiatives tend to be less viable, precisely because of the vulnerability of their workers, the instability arising from constant internal political and ideological disputes , absence of a market oriented pragmatic approach, and the lack of professional management.

In this context, as this report will show, the emergence of the concept of the digital solidarity economy has become one of the central elements in Brazilian

public policy formulation for the field during the studied period, particularly after its official endorsement by SENAES in 2024. However, what some researchers describe as a growing consensus remains, in practice, a contested and ambiguous field. Our research indicates that the concept is still unclear to many cooperatives, subject to internal disputes within SENAES, and, although featured in an official Labor Ministry publication in 2024, it was largely absent from the policies formally approved in the National Conference on the Solidarity Economy, the main forum where the First Conference on Digital Solidarity Economy and Platform Cooperativism took place.

Why Platform Cooperatives Fail: Technological Dependency and Market Constraints in Araraquara

The empirical literature on the conditions under which public support for cooperative platforms fails both illustrates and complicates the field theoretical evolution. Estima (2024) and Estima and Lemos (2025) provide the most detailed account of the Araraquara experiment, the first cooperative platform initiative in Brazil (Fig. 7) to receive direct support from a municipal government, which was incubated in Araraquara's Public Incubator for the Creative and Solidarity Economy (IPECS) but collapsed after less than a year of operation. Their analysis identifies two distinct mechanisms of failure.

The first concerns technological dependency. The drivers' cooperative's initial app was developed and controlled by outsourced commercial developers, hosted on U.S. cloud infrastructure, and therefore exposed to dollar-denominated pricing fluctuations, data opacity, and maintenance costs, as well as service conditions arbitrarily controlled by third-party developers over which the cooperative had no governance. These costs eventually rose to a level that made the platform's financial operation unviable. The second mechanism emerged even after the cooperative transitioned to its own fully controlled application, Chama. Financial sustainability still depended on attracting both passengers and drivers, yet doing so proved structurally difficult without a marketing budget and price

subsidies. With low ride volumes, the fees charged to cover infrastructural costs did not generate proportional returns to workers, which in turn fueled internal conflicts within the driver community. This case demonstrates that the challenges facing platform cooperatives are not only legal and financial, but also market-structural: public support must address not only the conditions for cooperative formation and platform development, but also the competitive environment in which cooperatives are expected to survive.

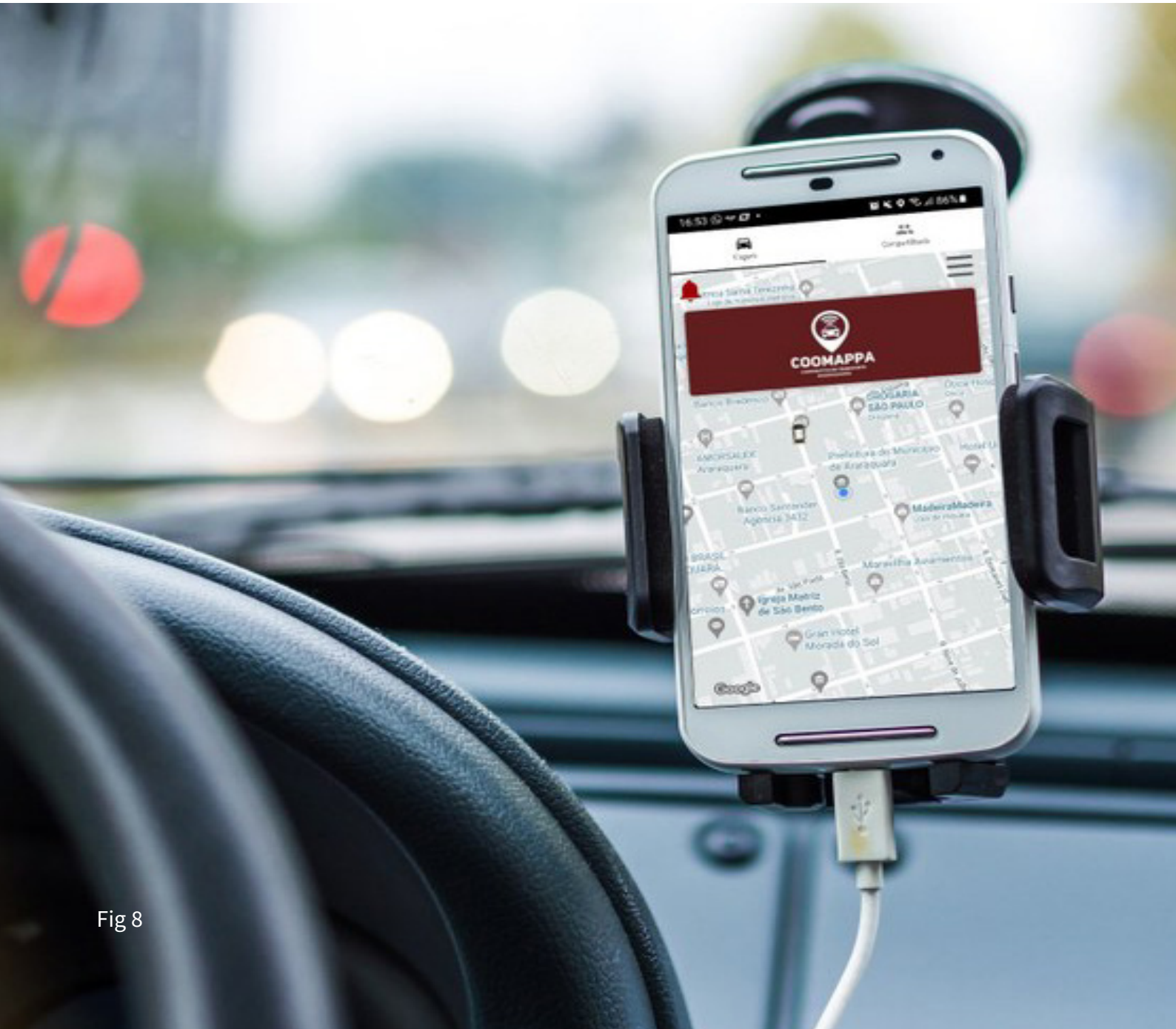

Fig 8

Toward a Composite Analytical Framework

Taken together, these different perspectives provide an analytical framework that is more adequate for understanding the Brazilian experience than any single approach alone. The institutional design literature identifies the specific instruments, such as procurement preferences, credit lines, legal reforms, incubation programs, that Brazil has proposed but not implemented. The political organization literature helps comprehend why implementation has been incomplete: without autonomous worker organizing and broad representation in governance bodies, policy spaces tend to be dominated by more institutionalized actors. And the Digital Solidarity Economy framework captures the conceptual tension that runs through the entire period studied, between a narrower understanding of platform cooperativism as a sectoral policy for specific types of worker-owned applications and a broader vision of democratic digitalization connected to Brazil's solidarity economy tradition. As the following sections show, this tension was not merely academic. It shaped the political dynamics within SENAES, the disputes over which organizations received public resources, and ultimately the gap between the ambitious proposals that emerged from four years of policy formulation and the limited institutional outcomes they produced.

3.2 Methodology

This research is based on a participatory action research approach (Ander-Egg, 2003), combining systematic inquiry with practical engagement in the field being studied. Rather than observing platform cooperativism and its relationship with the state from a distance, the research was conducted from within the policy spaces where that relationship was being negotiated, allowing for a form of knowledge production that is both analytically rigorous and oriented toward the practical goals of the actors involved. This methodological orientation is reflected in the structure of the report itself, which opens with an action plan before presenting the empirical and theoretical foundation that supports it.

Data collection drew on three complementary sources: semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, participant observation in policymaking spaces, and systematic document analysis. Together, these methods enabled the research to trace not only what policies were proposed and adopted but why certain measures advanced while others stalled, and whose interests and organizational capacities shaped those outcomes.

3.2.1 Interviews

The interview sample was built through the snowball method (Vinuto, 2014), beginning with seed informants identified through a review of the academic literature and official government documents on platform cooperativism in Brazil, and expanding through their referrals to other relevant actors. This approach was particularly appropriate for a field in which expressing critical views about public policies can expose workers, cooperative leaders, bureaucrats, and scholars to political or institutional retaliation, making trust a precondition for participation. The sample reached saturation after fourteen interviews, the point at which additional conversations ceased to yield new analytical insights.

The sample covered three sectors. In the cooperative and platform sector, interviews included members of the national leadership of Liga Coop, the Technology Sector of the MTST, the platform development team of Senoritas Courier, and a local drivers' cooperative in Rio de Janeiro that uses a public mobility platform. In academia, interviews included researchers who participated in drafting the 2022 Platform Cooperativism Action Plan, those involved in official policy formulation spaces between 2022 and 2024, and coordinators of government-funded public platform development projects at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. In government and public institutions, interviews included career officials from SENAES and the Ministry of Labor, officials from the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, representatives of a municipal public IT company, members of a Subsecretariat for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and representatives of the National Data Protection Council.

The Limits of Snowball Sampling in a Politically Sensitive Field

A relevant limitation of the snowball method is that it may fail to reach actors outside the social networks of initial participants. Despite obtaining contact information for the National Secretary for Solidarity Economy and members of the OCB through informants, invitations to these actors remained unanswered by the conclusion of fieldwork in October 2025. Their perspectives are therefore not directly represented in the interview data, though their institutional positions and public statements are incorporated through document analysis.

All interviews were conducted in semi-structured format, remotely and in person, without financial incentives for participation. Sessions were recorded and transcribed, and interviewees were given the option to identify themselves or remain anonymous. Given the small and interconnected nature of this policy community and the sensitivity of some of the findings, no participant names are disclosed in the report. Interview data were analyzed using the affinity diagram method described by Charmaz (2014), which segments transcripts into discrete excerpts expressing single ideas, codes them, and groups them by similarity to identify recurring and divergent themes across participants.

3.2.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation is an essential dimension of the participatory action research approach adopted here, enabling the researcher to understand practices, interactions, and meanings from within relevant institutional contexts rather than from a solely external analytical position.

The primary sites of participant observation were the 2022 annual conference of the Platform Cooperativism Consortium (PCC) in Rio de Janeiro and the First Thematic Conference on Digital Solidarity Economy and Platform Cooperativism, held in May 2025 in Brasília.

The PCC conference provided early observational access to the field at a formative moment of mobilization, capturing the articulation among researchers, cooperatives, and social movements that preceded and shaped the institutional engagement with the incoming Lula government. The 2025 Thematic Conference, organized by SENAES within the preparatory process for the Fourth National Conference on the Solidarity Economy (IV CONAES), offered a contrasting vantage point: a formally institutionalized policy space bringing together representatives of Liga Coop, EITA Cooperative, the Technology Sector of the MTST, members of the Free Software Brazil Network, and public officials including National Secretary Gilberto Carvalho, alongside academic researchers. Following plenary sessions, participants worked in thematic groups that deliberated and submitted proposals by consensus to be forwarded to the IV CONAES.

The researcher's engagement in both conferences allowed for direct observation of how policy proposals were negotiated, which arguments gained traction, and which were set aside, providing analytical insights that would not have been accessible through documents or retrospective interviews alone. A third site of observation was a meeting of cooperative drivers in Rio de Janeiro who use a public mobility platform, held in June 2024, which offered a ground-level perspective on how workers experience the intersection between cooperative organization and digital infrastructure.

In addition to the conferences, the researcher reviewed the complete video recordings of the seminar, "Platform Cooperativism: Which Public Policies Are Possible?" The seminar was the first official event organized by SENAES about the theme, in partnership with Digilabour and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation at the National School of Public Administration (ENAP) in July 2023. Though this event did not involve direct participation, the recordings provided access to deliberations, exchanges, and points of contention that shaped the policy agenda in its formative stage. This information complemented the retrospective accounts offered by interview participants who attended the event in person.

Fig 9

3.2.3 Document Analysis

The document analysis mapped how public discourse, legislation, and state initiatives have shaped the development of platform cooperativism and the digital solidarity economy in Brazil across the studied period. The corpus integrates federal legal and institutional sources, government policy documents, civil society publications, and academic outputs.

Key legal and institutional sources include Decree No. 5.811 of 2006 creating the National Council for the Solidarity Economy (CNES), the Workers' Cooperatives Law (Law 12.690/2012), the Paul Singer Law (Law 15.068/2024), Ministerial Ordinance MTE No. 481 of March 2025 regulating CADSOL, and the 2025 Supreme Court decisions on mandatory OCB affiliation and cooperative taxation. Government policy documents include the First National Solidarity Economy Plan

(2015–2019), the 2024 publication Digital Solidarity Economy produced jointly by the Ministry of Labor, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, and the research group Digilabour, the resolutions of the 2023 ENAP seminar, the final resolutions of the First Thematic Conference on Digital Solidarity Economy and Platform Cooperativism (2025), and the notebook of approved proposals of the Fourth CONAES (2025). An internal SENAES dispatch (No. 47997.253666/2025-13) reporting the state of digital solidarity economy initiatives to the Technical Chambers on Digital Economy and Digital Citizenship of the Federal Government's Digital Transformation Committee was also incorporated.

Civil society sources include the 2022 Action Plan for Platform Cooperativism presented to then-candidate Lula, and the 2024 report produced by EITA Cooperative synthesizing the discussions and outcomes of the ENAP seminar and assessing how effectively the federal government implemented the policies proposed in 2023. Together, these documents enable the identification of converging and diverging narratives across state, academic, and social movement actors, and provide the evidentiary basis for the assessment of policy progress and gaps in Section IV.

IV. Analysis: Four Years of Platform Cooperativism Policy in Brazil

Between 2022 and 2025, platform cooperativism moved from the margins of Brazilian public policy debate to the agenda of a federal government that formally recognized it as a field worthy of institutional attention. The National Secretariat for Popular and Solidarity Economy (SENAES) organized several dedicated policy spaces, commissioned official publications and convened a national thematic conference that gathered hundreds of participants from across the country.

Formal Recognition: Its Concrete Expressions and Limitations

The institutional dialogue produced concrete material results. With a total federal investment of USD 2.6 million, two major cooperatives platforms are currently under development: one for ride-hailing drivers, intended for Liga Coop, the national federation of driver cooperatives, and another designed as a white-label platform, an innovative model in which the state provides the public infrastructure and technological stack that workers can later appropriate and adapt autonomously. This is an example of international significance, as it represents one of the pioneering experiences of a national government directly financing the development of platforms under workers' control.

The debate among academia, social movements, and government has also given rise to a new theoretical and policy framework: the Digital Solidarity Economy (DSE). Officially adopted by SENAES in 2024, this emerging field seeks to reconcile platform cooperativism with the solidarity economy and responds to calls from researchers and activists for locally grounded reinterpretations of the concept, particularly in the Global South (Grohmann, 2023; Veronese and Salvagni, 2025). Therefore, by any measure, these measures represent meaningful progress for a field that had no presence in the federal government four years earlier.

And yet, by the end of the period, none of the cooperatives interviewed for this research had benefited from a single public procurement contract, credit line, or tax incentive, even after managing to register in CADSOL following over a year of attempts. Organizations such as MTST depended primarily on self-generated revenue and sporadic contributions from international partners such as the Mondragón Corporation. Local cooperatives retained little surplus for reinvestment, and federations such as Liga Coop depended almost entirely on parliamentary amendments to cover basic operating costs.

Stagnation, Uncertainty, and Sudden Shifts in Direction

The legal framework governing cooperatives remained unchanged. Within existing consultative bodies for the solidarity economy, including the National Council for the Solidarity Economy (CNES) and the National Commission overseeing CADSOL, there are no representatives of platform cooperatives.The DSE, officially launched as a new conceptual paradigm by the Ministry of Labor in 2024, had largely disappeared from the final resolutions of the Fourth National Conference on the Solidarity Economy just one year later. The two flagship platform development projects remained unfinished as the administration drew to a close. What was formally recognized had not been institutionally consolidated, and what was institutionally initiated had not been structurally embedded.

This section analyzes how that gap came to be. It does so by identifying the underlying dynamics that shaped what the state did and did not do during this period.

Five analytical threads run through the findings: the transformation of platform cooperativism from a grassroots demand into a state-recognized agenda; the government's strategic choice to concentrate resources on technological infrastructure and flagship initiatives rather than systemic policy instruments; the conceptual and political contestation surrounding the Digital Solidarity Economy; the maintenance of legal stagnation; and the structural conditions, inside

government, within the movement, and in the broader political landscape, that made more ambitious implementation impossible within a single electoral term.

4.1 From Grassroots Demand to State-Recognized Agenda

The entry of platform cooperativism into the Brazilian federal government's policy agenda was the result of sustained and organized advocacy by a coalition of cooperatives, academic researchers, and solidarity economy activists who spent years building a shared program and directing it toward the state. The 2022 Action Plan for Platform Cooperativism, presented to then-candidate Lula during the election campaign, represented the crystallization of this effort: a document developed collectively by hundreds of organizations, researchers, and platform worker movements that outlined specific demands for public procurement, solidarity financing, legal reform, and research incubation. Lula's pledge to foster platform worker cooperatives in partnership with municipalities was the first formal political commitment at the national level to this agenda.

The reelection of Lula and the recreation of SENAES opened the institutional door, but crossing it required continuous negotiation. Platform cooperativism had to compete for attention within SENAES against the entire breadth of the solidarity economy agenda, the reconstruction of which after the Bolsonaro period was itself a consuming institutional task.
In this context, the seminar "Platform Cooperativism: Which Public Policies Are Possible?", organized in July 2023 by SENAES, digilabour, and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation at the National School of Public Administration (ENAP), Brazil's federal institution responsible for training civil servants and hosting policy dialogues, marked the first official government-convened space for translating the demands of the 2022 Action Plan into concrete policy proposals. Its significance was not only in the content it produced but in establishing a recurring pattern: policy formulation in this field has happened primarily through events and publications convened or commissioned by a small group of actors with access to academic scholars, international Foundations and SENAES, rather than through formal deliberative mechanisms.

Legitimate Conquests, Discretionary Choices

The scale of the movements, as well as the proximity to power, were decisive factors that had observable consequences regarding which organizations gained visibility and access to resources. Cooperatives and national movements that participated actively in government-convened spaces, maintained direct relationships with public officials and congressperson, and had the organizational capacity to engage in sustained policy advocacy were far more successful in accessing public support and funding than those that participated only sporadically or worked primarily at the local level. This is not a condemnation of the few legitimate actors who, through their many efforts, conquer more resources, but rather a structural observation: when policy access depends on advocacy capacity and informal networks rather than transparent criteria and open competitive processes, the distribution of benefits reflects the distribution of power rather than the distribution of social need.

4.2 State Funding for Platform Development: The Strategic Bet on Technological Infrastructure

The most concrete and sustained commitment made by the federal government during this period was the development of two digital platforms for workers, financed through the Diffuse Rights Fund administered by the Ministry of Justice: a mobility platform for Liga Coop, with approximately USD 2 million in federal funding, developed in partnership with the Federal University of Rio Grande (FURG); and a white-label delivery platform for the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), with approximately USD 600,000, designed as a modular infrastructure that could be adapted by different cooperatives and sectors. Together, these two projects absorbed the overwhelming majority of federal public investment in the field during the 2022–2025 period.

This strategic choice reflected both a lesson learned and a calculation about what was politically feasible. The lesson came from the Araraquara experience of 2019, where the platform cooperative support collapsed largely because the cooperative had maintained dependency on commercial applications and foreign cloud infrastructure, leaving it without control over its own data, source code, or operational continuity. The conclusion drawn from this experience, reinforced by cooperatives' accounts of repeated interruptions of service or prohibitive costs with white-label commercial apps and private third-party software hosted on Amazon Web Services or Google Cloud, was that technological autonomy was a precondition for cooperative viability, not an optional feature. Developing public digital infrastructures independent of commercial platforms and Big Tech servers thus emerged as the policy instrument most directly responsive to the documented needs of cooperative organizations.

Budgetary Delays and the Fragility of Government-Led Platforms

The calculation about feasibility was equally important. In a context of fiscal austerity, limited political leverage for SENAES within the federal apparatus, and the difficulty of advancing systemic policy instruments through a Congress dominated by conservative blocs, funding platform development through the Diffuse Rights Fund offered a pathway to concrete, visible results that did not require legislative action. The choice was pragmatic, but it came at a cost: by concentrating resources on two specific platform projects rather than distributing them across a broader ecosystem of actors, the government made a strategic bet on scale over diversity, hoping that larger, more capable actors could compete more effectively with Big Tech on a national basis. This bet was not illegitimate, but it was not made transparently. The organizations that did not benefit questioned the discretion of public power, contributing to internal tensions within the movement.

The two platforms also encountered significant implementation challenges. Both suffered delays due to the late approval of the federal budget in Congress and complications in the transfer of funds from the federal government to uni-

versities, standard bureaucratic obstacles that the absence of a permanent and predictable funding mechanism makes unavoidable. Neither platform was operational by the end of the period studied, meaning that even the government's most concrete investment in the field remained unrealized as the Lula administration drew to a close. The Liga Coop platform's release is now expected for 2026, and the UFSC white-label platform is projected for completion in 2027. Both are government policies rather than state policies, meaning they remain vulnerable to abandonment or redirection under a future administration, exactly as solidarity economy programs were dismantled in 2019.

In the case of Liga Coop, SENAES secured resources to enable the federation to develop its own system, described by the organization as an "inter-cooperative app" rather than a commercial platform. The project aims to serve cooperatives in the 18 states currently represented by the federation. Ownership of the platform by the federation, rather than by the government, is seen as crucial to ensure continuity regardless of political changes.

Worker-Centered Platform Design in the Liga Coop and UFSC Projects

Data governance is another central pillar of Liga Coop's project. The Federation of Cooperatives has partnered with FURG to guarantee that all information will be hosted in national data centers, framed as a dual commitment to national data sovereignty and worker access. The development team includes professionals with prior experience in major Brazilian mobility companies such as 99, a ride-hailing platform later acquired by the Chinese company Didi Chuxing, as well as leading figures from Brazil's free software movement and from public IT companies like PROCERGS, the state technology enterprise of Rio Grande do Sul. However, no federal funding was allocated for worker training or communication and marketing, which are key for user adoption. Liga Coop has tried to fill these gaps by establishing partnerships with university extension programs and collaborating with SENAES's communication department, but the absence of federal funding for these activities remains a limiting factor.

In the case of the UFSC platform, it is designed as a modular and adaptable digital infrastructure that can be customized for different associations and economic sectors. The project plans to deliver a pilot version in 2026 with a motorcycle courier association in Florianópolis, and the complete system is expected to be finalized in 2027 for broader cooperative use. The development of the platform highlights key aspects of building a worker-centered platform: the multidisciplinary team of professors, graduate students, and undergraduate researchers has prioritized building an algorithmic governance model that avoids reproducing the exploitative dynamics of commercial platforms. Based on worker consultation workshops, the developers have proposed increasing the time window for accepting delivery requests, contrasting with the accelerated and punitive logic of corporate systems that encourage risky behavior. Longer delivery times for clients could be offset by lower prices, as cooperative platforms do not aim for profit beyond fair worker compensation.

Intellectual Property Control and University-Centered Development

A key aspect of the UFSC's project is data transparency. The platform is being designed to ensure that all workers have full access to transaction records, event logs, and performance metrics, preventing the creation of a new "black box." User interface design also emphasizes accessibility, replicating the familiar visual and functional patterns of mainstream apps while remaining friendly for people with limited literacy or digital skills, supported by training sessions. The project also includes open APIs for researchers and public agencies, although UFSC faces challenges regarding intellectual property and source code protection to prevent private companies from appropriating the software. Initially, the system will operate on UFSC's internal infrastructure, funded by FINEP, which is suitable for the pilot stage. Due to technical and certification constraints, the app will be released for Android devices, which account for roughly 88 percent of smartphones in Brazil.

While the final legal framework is still under discussion, UFSC is expected to retain patent and licensing control, allowing cooperatives to access the platform through a certification process verifying that they are genuine worker organizations that adhere to the principles of platform cooperativism and the DSE. Although this approach is meant to prevent private appropriation of a public asset, it may also limit horizontal knowledge transfer, making cooperation between universities and worker organizations more one-directional. The UFSC experience also exemplifies how Brazil's current model of technological development within the DSE framework remains anchored in universities rather than in worker-led cooperatives or community-based laboratories through public procurement.

While this structure guarantees technical quality and access to public infrastructure, it reinforces an asymmetry in power and resources: grassroots collectives that have built their own autonomous platforms, such as the collaboration between MTST and Senoritas Courier, received no public investment during this period. In the long term, this approach risks reinforcing dependence on academic and governmental intermediaries instead of enabling autonomous, community-owned infrastructures such as cooperative data centers, community networks, and local digital laboratories.

4.3 The Digital Solidarity Economy: A Paradigm in Dispute

The most significant conceptual development of the period was the emergence and official adoption of the Digital Solidarity Economy as a framework for understanding and governing platform cooperativism in Brazil. Officially endorsed by SENAES in 2024 through the jointly produced publication with the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, the DSE framework proposed a shift away from a narrow focus on platform governance and cooperative ownership of apps toward a broader understanding of democratic digitalization embedded in the solidarity economy's territorial, intersectional, and social justice commitments. As Veronese and Salvagni (2025) and Rubim and Milanez (2024) argue, this represented not

simply a terminological change but a different theory of transformation: one that centers community data governance, digital sovereignty, and the integration of digital tools into existing solidarity economy networks, rather than treating the cooperative platform as the primary unit of analysis.

Reframing Platform Cooperativism Through the DSE

For many actors within SENAES and in the academic community most closely associated with the policy process, the DSE framework represented a genuine intellectual and political advance. It allowed the debate to expand beyond the mobility and delivery sectors that had dominated early discussions of platform cooperativism, connecting digital policy to the broader social and economic fabric of marginalized territories and recognizing diverse forms of digital appropriation that do not fit neatly into the category of a "platform." The chatbot through which Contrate Quem Luta connects consumers and workers via WhatsApp infrastructure, for instance, is better understood as a DSE initiative than as a platform cooperative in the strict sense, and the framework created conceptual space for recognizing and public support for such pragmatic adaptations.

The Contested Institutionalization of the DSE

However, the DSE concept also became a source of internal conflict that ultimately constrained rather than expanded the policy field. Within SENAES, interviewees described the 2024 publication as perceived by some officials as the product of a particular theoretical and political faction rather than a consensual outcome of the secretariat's work, contributing to internal disputes that interrupted the planned development of the framework. A strategic plan to develop DSE in partnership with IPEA, Brazil's federal research institute, envisioning public calls for research proposals, methodological frameworks for implementation, and indicators to guide funding, was halted by internal political conflicts, budgetary constraints, and shortages of technical personnel. Among cooperatives, reception was mixed: organizations more closely linked to technological

development welcomed the framework as a challenge to technosolutionist logic, while others warned that the distinction between DSE and platform cooperativism often reflected academic and bureaucratic disputes with limited relevance to workers' everyday realities.

The practical consequence of this contestation was visible in what happened to the DSE concept as it moved through official policy channels. Although it was in the title of the First Thematic Conference on Platform Cooperativism and the Digital Solidarity Economy, the final resolutions of the Fourth CONAES, the broader solidarity economy conference of which the thematic conference was one stage, contained no reference to the Digital Solidarity Economy at all. This trajectory illustrates a recurring pattern in the period studied: the gap between what is produced in policy formulation spaces and what is institutionally consolidated in formal policy instruments.

Fig 10

4.4 Legal Framework: Legislative Stagnation and Judicial Setbacks

There is a legal stagnation in which even recent advances have not translated into concrete support for platform cooperatives. Although the Paul Singer Law (Law 15.068/2024) formally created the permanent National Policy for the Solidarity Economy and sought to make it less dependent on the political will of each administration, it did not mention digital cooperativism or platform-based enterprises, and none of the organizations interviewed reported having benefited from it. Despite repeated demands from the movement, the government has also taken no steps to reform Law 5.764/1971 or Law 12.690/2012 to reflect the realities of digital cooperatives and Digital Solidarity Economy initiatives. Dialogues with legislators on a specific law for platform cooperativism remain informal and incipient.

Formalization Barriers and Mandatory OCB Affiliation

Within the stagnant legal framework, interviewees described legal recognition itself as a major barrier. Platform cooperatives consistently characterized registration, fiscal formalization, and affiliation with OCB as bureaucratic, costly, and exclusionary. Although the constitutional principle of freedom of association had been interpreted in recent decades as eliminating the obligation of OCB affiliation, in 2025, the Supreme Court changed its ruling to that mandatory registration with OCB remains valid. While the decision stemmed from a specific case and lacks general applicability, it reinforces the legitimacy of commercial boards that refuse to register non-affiliated cooperatives, thereby denying them access to fiscal and legal benefits. Even some large cooperative federations, representing up to 5,000 workers, reported failing in their first attempts at formalization due to the complexity of these procedures, and no public policy currently offers financial or legal support for this process.

Fiscal Disputes and Legal Uncertainty for Platform Work

Uncertainty also comes from pending judicial and fiscal disputes. The Supreme Court case RE 672.215 may extend corporate taxes such as PIS, COFINS, and CSLL to cooperatives, threatening their already fragile economic viability. At the same time, proposals discussed in 2023 to tax Big Tech and create funding mechanisms for cooperative development had been abandoned by 2025. In a context of austerity and constrained public budgets, this omission is especially significant. The broader regulatory environment also remains unresolved: negotiations over labor regulation for platform work stalled, the proposed bill never advanced in Congress, and platform labor in Brazil remains unregulated, leaving both workers and cooperatives without clear legal protections.

4.5 Structural Obstacles to Consolidation

The gap between recognition and implementation during this period was not primarily a product of bad faith, individual failures, or insufficient effort by the actors involved. It was produced by structural conditions that would have constrained any government attempting to build a new field of public policy under similar circumstances. Four such conditions stand out.

Institutional Fragility Within SENAES

The first challenge is institutional fragility within SENAES. The advancement of the DSE and platform cooperativism agendas depended, according to multiple interviewees, on fewer than six officials within the secretariat, whose individual availability, internal political standing, and relationships with partner organizations determined what moved forward and what stalled. This is a symptom of chronic understaffing, bureaucratic overload, and the absence of stable administrative procedures for a policy field that had been entirely dismantled just three years earlier. The practical consequences were significant: the failed attempt to

secure approximately USD 9 million from FINEP to fund PRONINC was derailed in part by the loss of key interlocutors inside the agency due to delays on the part of SENAES; the interruption of dialogue with IPEA on DSE methodology was attributed to internal conflicts and personnel shortages; and the delays in fund transfers to universities were compounded by the limited administrative capacity to manage complex interinstitutional agreements.

Lack of Cross-Ministerial Coordination for DSE and Platform Cooperativism

The second structural obstacle is the near-total absence of interministerial coordination. Platform cooperativism and the DSE are inherently cross-cutting agendas, connecting labor policy, technology policy, education, regional development, and industrial policy in ways that no single ministry can address alone. Yet SENAES operated with minimal coordination with the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, which manages far larger funding sources including the National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development. Only isolated initiatives, including a project to digitally transform an agricultural cooperative in Rio Grande do Sul, gained access to MCTI resources, and this happened through individual university relationships rather than structured interministerial collaboration. SENAES was reportedly requested to present its policy portfolio to only one official integrated interministerial mapping initiative during the entire 2022–2025 period. Moreover, the Attorney General's Office issued a legal opinion reaffirming mandatory OCB affiliation for cooperatives without consulting SENAES or the platform cooperative organizations directly affected, illustrating how the fragmentation of the federal government can produce contradictory signals that undermine even the limited progress made in specific sectors.

Movement Fragmentation and Its Institutional Costs

The third obstacle is the fragmentation of the cooperative movement itself. Despite producing an ambitious common program over three years of participation

in government-convened and academic policy spaces, platform cooperatives and DSE collectives maintain limited coordination outside of those spaces. Most relationships among movements are mediated through specific academic or political intermediaries rather than through autonomous, movement-led structures, and the absence of a permanent coordination body means that collective advocacy capacity is assembled and reassembled for each policy moment rather than maintained continuously. This fragmentation has tangible institutional consequences: platform cooperatives have no representatives in the National Council for the Solidarity Economy, no seats on the CADSOL National Commission that governs access to public procurement, and no organized presence, such as caucuses, parliamentary fronts, and dialogues with multiple parties, in the legislative debates that most directly affect their legal status. Cooperatives with sustained parliamentary relationships, primarily the larger federations, at least accessed few resources; those that operated primarily through executive-led policy spaces did not. Furthermore, none of the movement's sectors have continuously and structurally accompanied and influenced the judicial processes opposing the movement, such as Supreme Court decisions, without this more collective integration and coordination.

Short Electoral Cycles and Long Policy Development Timelines

The fourth and perhaps most fundamental structural obstacle is the temporal mismatch between the pace of policy formulation and the rhythm of Brazilian electoral politics. Building a new field of state policy requires sustained investment in institutional design, legal reform, training infrastructure, and governance mechanisms across multiple years. The four-year term of the Lula administration was largely absorbed by the continuous and progressive institutional dialogue that, while essential for formulation, did not succeed in transforming recommendations into law or permanent public policy before the end of the mandate. This is not unique to platform cooperativism: it is the chronic vulnerability of the solidarity economy agenda in Brazil more broadly, as demonstrated by the dismantling of SENAES in 2019. But it is particularly acute for platform coopera-

tivism, which entered the federal agenda without the accumulated institutional infrastructure that older solidarity economy sectors had built over two previous Workers' Party administrations. The digital platforms that remain under development as the administration closes, the legal reforms that remain on paper, and the governance mechanisms that were proposed but not established are all expressions of this temporal mismatch.

4.6 What the Four Years Produced

Against these structural constraints, what the period did produce deserves recognition. The official recognition of platform cooperativism as a field of public policy by the Brazilian state, expressed through the organization of the 2023 ENAP seminar and consolidated in the 2025 thematic conference, represents a genuine institutional threshold. The conceptual development of the Digital Solidarity Economy, contested as it remains, has expanded the scope of the policy debate in ways that resonate with Brazil's decades-long solidarity economy tradition and create connections to broader digital governance agendas. The recreation of SENAES and the passage of the Paul Singer Law (Law 15.068/2024) established a permanent legal framework for the solidarity economy, even if platform cooperativism was not explicitly included. The recreation of CADSOL through the 2025 ministerial ordinance restored the certification infrastructure through which solidarity enterprises can access public procurement, however dysfunctional that infrastructure remains in practice. And the two platform development projects, despite their delays, represent the first significant state investment in cooperative digital infrastructure in Brazilian history, producing technical knowledge about worker-centered algorithmic governance, data transparency, and public platform licensing that would not otherwise exist.

Fig 11

Why Recognition Was Not Enough

These are real achievements. They matter because they create institutional footholds from which a future administration can either build or retreat, and because the movement of people, organizations, and ideas that produced them has not dissolved. But they also represent the limit of what four years of policy recognition without policy consolidation can achieve. The central finding of this research is that formal recognition of platform cooperativism by a politically sympathetic government, while necessary, is not sufficient to build a sustainable field of state policy. What is needed, and what the action plan in Section I is designed to advance, is the construction of the institutional architecture that would make recognition durable: permanent funding mechanisms, governance structures with genuine cooperative representation, legal frameworks adapted to digital cooperative realities, and a movement capable of advocating for these demands independently of any particular government's goodwill.

4.7 Final Considerations: From Fragmented Pilot Programs to Coherent State Policy

Consolidating the Digital Solidarity Economy in Brazil requires moving beyond fragmented pilot programs toward a comprehensive state policy capable of integrating financing, legal reform, education, and digital infrastructure within a coherent governance framework. This is not a short-term task nor a project that fits neatly within a single four-year administration. Rather, it represents a long-term historical effort—a process of structural transformation in how technology, labor, and democracy intersect in the twenty-first century.

At its core, the digital solidarity economy is part of a broader struggle to redefine the meaning of work and technological progress in Brazil and across the Global South. It seeks to overcome the contradictions of a digital economy that has concentrated wealth and power while deepening precariousness and inequality. Building cooperative, worker-owned technological systems means constructing the material and institutional foundations for decent work, data sovereignty, and shared prosperity in the digital age.

This transformation demands persistence, coordination, and imagination. It depends on the continuity of public policies beyond electoral cycles, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and the active participation of civil society, universities, and the labor movement. The goal is not only to regulate or mitigate the harms of digital capitalism, but to create alternative infrastructures—technological, economic, and cultural—that embody solidarity, equality, and collective intelligence.

By aligning cooperative innovation with the principles of technological sovereignty, social justice, and participatory democracy, Brazil has the opportunity to become a global reference in building equitable and sustainable digital economies rooted in the realities and aspirations of the Global South. This is the path toward a future where technology serves people, work is dignified, and digital infrastructures become common goods that strengthen democracy itself.

V. Annex: Detailed Policy Evolution Assessment by Area (2022–2025)

Table 1. Policy Recommendation

Category	Main Recommendations
Financing & Economic Instruments	Full Digitize CADSOL with online access and support. Integrate cooperatives in to public procurement platforms: Contrata+Brasil, SICx, and InovaCPIN. Implement the National Solidarity Economy Fund as a permanent mechanism. Map credit programs in public banks and development agencies. Facilitate banking access, PIX integration, smart contracts and social currencies interoperability with Drex, and capital access via Central Bank and Federal Revenue Service specific regimes Create specific tax/social security regimes. Develop anti-dumping enforcement with CADE. Include worker training and marketing, adoption budgets in state-funded platforms. Extend credit and procurement to non-formally registered self-managed worker initiatives. Design microcredit lines and community financing mechanisms for early-stage cooperatives. Tax Big Techs to fund a Digital Sovereignty and Solidarity Innovation Fund.

Category	Main Recommendations
Research,- Training & Incubation	Create a national database of platform cooperatives Secure stable PRONINC funding (LOA, parliamentary amendment Expand PRONINC to include tech incubators and DSE cooperatives. Launch a National Training Program blending technical and popular education, with stipends for precarious worker Found a National School for DSE and Platform Cooperativism. Include cooperation and digital citizenship in the National Education Plan (2024-2034). Fund research via CNPq/CAPES; promote South-South cooperation.
Governance	Create a Secretariat for Digital Solidarity Economy under the new solidarity economy ministry. Guarantee participation in the CNES and CADSOL national commission. Establish a permanent interministerial group (Economy, MCTI, Industry, Planning, etc.). Form a National Council for Platform Cooperativism and DSE with clear goals and indicators. Engage state and municipal forums (e.g., CONSECTI, Front of Mayors, Circular Economy Forum).

Category	Main Recommendations
Legislative Action & Mobilization	Form a Parliamentary Front for DSE and platform cooperatives. Engage party foundations to include DSE in party platforms Publish a unified policy booklet for parliamentary lobbying Partner with DIEESE to monitor budget cycles (PPA, LOA) Update the Cooperative Law to include digital forms. Create a sectoral fund via progressive platform taxation Revise the Paul Singer Law (13.440/2018). Differentiate cooperative vs. commercial platforms in social security.
Judiciary & Legal Activism	Use the Diffuse Rights Fund to finance DSE projects. Partner with Labor Courts to report platform abuses. Monitor key court cases. Debate data property and promote open data and patent waivers.
Movement Building	Hold regular national meetings of cooperatives. Strengthen autonomous coordination among movements Create a dialogue table with OCB and UNISOL Brasil. Encourage traditional coops to procure from platform coops.

Category	Main Recommendations
Technological Infrastructure	Ensure long-term funding for the whitelabel platform. Expand partnerships with UFSC, SERPRO, DATAPREV. Assign SECOM a communication budget to boost adoption Secure worker control over data and algorithms. Publish guidelines for worker-centered platforms. Expand international partnerships (BRICS, Latin America, Africa). Prioritize national data centers for sovereignty and stable costs. Reinstate public procurement of cooperative and free software and support for tech cooperative federations Adopt public digital infrastructures (PIX APIs, hosting, cloud Create a public national cloud for cooperatives. Fund federated data centers via FNDCT. Require private data centers to reserve capacity for cooperatives and DSE as compensation for public subsidies.

Table 2. Evolution of Public Policy Proposals for Platform Cooperativism and the Digital Solidarity Economy in Brazil (2022–2025)

Period and Document	Policy Proposals
Financing & Promotion	
Action Plan (2022)	Public funding lines for platform cooperatives (PCs) Situate PCs within pre-existing solidarity economy (SE) networks Incentivize local production and consumption circuits and the circular economy Use environmental and social impact as criteria for public funding Focus on regional development
ENAP Seminar (2023)	Tax exemption for companies hiring PCs Prioritize PCs in public procurement Reduce tax burden for co-ops progressively by size/stage of development Public funding for popular co-op incubators Tax Big Techs to fund incentive programs for PCs Tax exemptions for community data-storage infrastructures Public procurement for free/open-source software produced by PCs

Period and Document	Policy Proposals
Digital Solidarity Economy Manifesto (2024)	Secure support including credit, public purchasing, and research funding for DSE Require investments in infrastructure (data storage, software, servers, providers) Fund development of public open geolocation systems Invest in infrastructure that enables federations to share resources
1st Thematic Conference on Platform Cooperativism and Digital Solidarity Economy (2025)	Demand specific funding lines at Development Banks: BNDES, FINEP, and the BRICS Bank Include PCs and DSE projects in BNDES's PROINCO for cooperatives and local productive arrangements Create a fair fiscal-contribution mechanism for Big Techs to fund DSE policies Provide access to public credit through a free, user-friendly online platform for DSE initiatives Ensure funding for ongoing university extension programs that incubate DSE initiatives Establish a public fund to create or strengthen Solidarity and Community Data Centers using open technologies
4th CONAES / National Solidarity Economy Plan (2025)	Create a National Solidarity Economy Fund Develop public digital platforms to facilitate online access to credit and crowdfunding for Solidarity Economy Enterprises (SEE) Guarantee stable funding, technical staff, and execution capacity for SENAES and PRONINC, ensured in federal budgets (LOA, PPA, LDO)

Period and Document	Policy Proposals
Action Plan (2022)	Foster 'bottom-up' initiatives within the SE framework Incentivize inter-cooperation as a scaling vector in the PC economy Articulate policies among regional development, digital, labor, and SE state agencies Promote self-management and workplace democracy Identify pre-existing networks and needs before proposing new solutions
Governance	
Seminar (2023)	Reconstruct the National SE Policy Create a multiple stakeholders management committee (government + civil society) for PC policy
Digital Solidarity Economy (2024)	Stimulate the formation of technology co-op federations Enforce PCs democratic control by members Articulate DSE initiatives with local associations and unions Connect with movements for digital sovereignty and technological autonomy

Period and Document	Policy Proposals
1st Thematic Conference (2025)	Promote cross-sector collaboration among government, civil society, universities, and the private sector Encourage international cooperation and networks for technology transfer and shared methodologies (e.g., ILO) Coordinate the MCTI, MTE, MEC, MDA, and MDS Develop interoperability between the National Employment System (SINE) and the National Registry of Solidarity Economy Enterprises (CADSOL) Establish a public certification and labeling system that identifies goods and services produced within the DSE framework
4th CONAES / National Solidarity Economy Plan (2025)	Create the Ministry of Popular and Solidarity Economy (MPSE) Strengthen CADSOL's social management with certification seals for SE products
Research, Training & Incubation	
Action Plan (2022)	Develop nationwide training programs and incubators for PCs Create regular public calls to encourage university–workers' organizations partnerships
Seminar (2023)	Incentivize university extension activities linking academia and civil society (offering digital infrastructure + training)

Period and Document	Policy Proposals
Digital Solidarity Economy (2024)	Reinforce National Program for Popular Cooperative Incubators (PRONINC) and Technological Incubators for Popular Cooperatives (ITCP) programs of MTE Train public officers, managers and bureaucrats on DSE, digital inclusion, data governance, digital sovereignty, platforms, algorithms, and AI Base curricula of incubators and training programs on popular education (Paulo Freire method) and communication principles
1st Thematic Conference (2025)	Revitalize PRONINC as tech incubators, linking MTE with MCTI and establishing it as a continuous university-extension policy Create a National DSE Training Program of formative local agents offering technical training in fiscal and legal issues, data management, digital marketing, market analysis and critical technology debates Implement formative cycles on democracy and collective care Consolidate a national mentoring and knowledge-exchange network among DSE collectives Teach cooperativism in primary and secondary schools

Period and Document	Policy Proposals
4th CONAES / National Solidarity Economy Plan (2025)	Expand PRONINC through interdisciplinary and territorialized public calls National Training Program in Solidarity Economy focused on financial education, pricing, marketing, cooperative management, and social entrepreneurship Include Solidarity Economy (SE) principles as a transversal axis in basic education Offer training cycles in digital technologies and platforms aligned with self-management and cooperativism Support research and projects on SE
Legal Framework	
Action Plan (2022)	Promote new cooperative regulation that fosters the PC ecosystem Guarantee coop workers rights for participation and combat false co-ops Regulate platform work
Seminar (2023)	Approve Bill PL 6606/19 ('Paul Singer Bill') and Update Cooperative Law 5.764/71 Regulate community development banks
Digital Solidarity Economy (2024)	Guarantee platform workers' rights and combat false co-ops without internal democracy Revise the legal SE and Cooperative framework to support DSE operations Prevent unfair competition (e.g., dumping) by private platforms through specific legislation and antitrust oversight

Period and Document	Policy Proposals
1st Thematic Conference (2025)	Update Law 5.764/71 to simplify co-op creation and operation Include DSE in the National Strategy and Brazil's AI Plan (PBIA 2024–2028) Create specific legislation to regulate DSE platforms Amend tax laws to simplify the cooperative fiscal regime
4th CONAES / National Solidarity Economy Plan (2025)	Approve a federal law establishing a differentiated tax, sanitary and social security regime for SEE Introduce reduced social security contributions (e.g., 11%) for SEE, ensuring pension and social protection access
Tech & Data Governance	
Action Plan (2022)	Emphasize free technological solutions Ensure ownership of data and physical infrastructure (not just software) Integrate community internet networks to PCs Promote data for the common good and digital sovereignty
Seminar (2023)	Emphasize free technological solutions Integrate community internet networks to PCs Ensure platform/algorithmic transparency for workers

Period and Document	Policy Proposals
Digital Solidarity Economy (2024)	Ensure PC workers' participation in technology design (Justice in Design principle) Use free and open-source technologies to reduce dependency on Big Techs Guarantee ownership of data and infrastructure (not just software) Utilize public digital infrastructures (e.g., Dataprev) to facilitate DSE commerce, data storage and shared infrastructure for federations
1st Thematic Conference (2025)	Develop a 100% public national cloud service accessible to DSE enterprises Enable the DSE to design algorithms and technical code for free and open-source software Strengthen free-technology labs and community training spaces to ensure digital sovereignty and technological appropriation
4th CONAES / National Solidarity Economy Plan (2025)	Develop, in partnership with universities and federal institutes, free, open-source, public platforms connecting consumers and Solidarity Economy enterprises (SEE), with tools for e-commerce, credit, crowdfunding and recycling

PC = Platform Cooperatives; **SE** = Solidarity Economy; **DSE** = Digital Solidarity Economy; **MTE** = Ministry of Labor and Employment; **MCTI** = Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation; **MEC** = Ministry of Education; MDA = Ministry of Agrarian Development; **MDS** = Ministry of Social Development.

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Figure 1: Ato MTST SP. Credits: Midia Ninja

Figure 2: Book launch of *Digital Solidarity Economy* at the National School of Public Administration (ENAP) in Brasília (DF).Source: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, accessed online at: https://rosalux.org.br/politicas-publicas-de-economia-solidaria-digital-sao-defendidas-pelo-governo-federal/

Figure 3: Liga Coop Ad Image

Figure 4: Action Plan for Platform Cooperativism in Brazil delivered to Lula (PT) by Bruna Isidoro Sampaio of Señoritas Courier.Source: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, accessed online at: https://rosalux.org.br/plano-de-acao-para-o-cooperativismo-de-plataforma-e-apresentado-em-evento-com-lula/

Figure 5: Señoritas Courier Ad Image

Figure 6: Platform Cooperatiism Consortium Annual Conference in Rio de Janeiro, 2022. Source: Trebor Scholz, Flickr, accessed online at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/treborscholz/albums/72177720303525349/

Figure 7: Photo made during PCC Annual Conference Rio de Janeiro 2022. Source: Trebor Scholz, Flickr, accessed online at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/treborscholz/albums/72177720303525349/

Figure 8: Coomappa Ad Image

Figure 9: Contrate Quem Luta (Hire those Who Struggle) Ad Image

Figure 10: Participants in the Fourth Conferência Nacional de Economia Solidária (CONAES)
Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment photo archive https://www.gov.br/trabalho-e-emprego/pt-br/assuntos/economia-solidaria/conaes/fotografias-e-videos/img/

Figure 11: Pedro Ventura / Agência Brasília – image published via Federal Senate news portal: https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2024/12/26/sancionada-lei-paul-singer-que-cria-a-politica-nacional-de-economia-solidaria

Endnotes

1 Pix is Brazil's instant payment system, created by the Central Bank, which enables free real-time money digital transfers between individuals, businesses, and public institutions without relying on intermediaries such as credit card companies.

2 FNDCT is Brazil's National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development, the federal government's main instrument for financing research, innovation, and technological development.

3 CAPES is Brazil's federal agency for the evaluation and support of graduate education, while CNPq is the country's main federal agency for funding scientific research and research fellowships.

4 CONSECTI is Brazil's National Council of State Secretaries for Science, Technology, and Innovation, which coordinates state-level authorities in these policy areas.

5 DIEESE is the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies, a Brazilian research institution that produces data and analysis to support trade unions and workers' organizations.

6 OCB is the Organização das Cooperativas Brasileiras, the main national body representing and coordinating Brazil's cooperative sector, while UNISOL is the Central de Cooperativas e Empreendimentos Solidários do Brasil, a national network representing cooperatives and solidarity economy enterprises.

7 FNDCT is Brazil's National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development, the federal government's main instrument for financing research, innovation, and technological development.

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